

THE ORACLE

Football Preview 2023



INDEX

EDITOR IN CHIEF

CLINTON ENGELBERGER

ADVERTISING SALES &

GRAPHIC DESIGN

LETICIA RABELO

SKYLAR WELCHMAN

COVER ART

SKYLAR WELCHMAN

COVER PHOTOS

USF ATHLETICS



PREVIEW, PAGE 4

KEVIN PATRICK, PAGE 6

TRANSFERS, PAGE 9

VICTORY DAY, PAGE 9

JASON VAUGHN, PAGE 12



WRITERS

NOAH VINSKY

CLINTON ENGELBERGER

BEATRIZ GONZALEZ

TIM KATON

SAMANTHA ALLEN

AARON MAMMAH



SIGN NOW FOR SAVINGS!!!

SIGN A FALL LEASE FOR \$500 OFF AT MOVE IN!

Your student inspired lifestyle awaits

- PRIVATE ROOMS AND BATHS
- PET FRIENDLY
- RESORT STYLE POOL
- BARK PARK
- FREE PARKING
- SCREENED IN PATIOS

813-540-1762 / @liveforestlake



Rides from campus to home

Hitch is a long distance rideshare in Florida. Enjoy 25% off your first three rides. **Use code: USFNEWS5**

Previewing USF's 2023 opponents

By Noah Vinsky
STAFF WRITER



After nearly defeating Florida at The Swamp last season, USF will have another chance to pull off a historic upset against another ranked SEC program, Alabama, on Sept. 16. USF ATHLETICS PHOTO

In arguably the most anticipated season in USF football history since first kicking off in 1997, the Bulls will compete under a rebuilt American Athletic Conference.

First year head coach Alex Golesh joins the Bulls after leading the nation's top offense at Tennessee, so all eyes will be on USF this season to see if the program can turn itself around.

After Houston, UCF and Cincinnati departed for the Big 12, the AAC added UTSA, UAB, Charlotte, North Texas, Rice and FAU. Five of the six newcomers will face off against the Bulls this season. This is also the first season since 2013 that USF and UCF will not participate in the War on I-4 rivalry.

USF at Western Kentucky, Sept. 2

Head coach: Tyson Helton (Fifth season)

Record in 2022: 9-5 (6-2 CUSA)

The Hilltoppers will return with redshirt senior quarterback

Austin Reed at the helm, who's 4,744 passing yards led the nation last season. His 40 passing touchdowns also ranked third in the country.

Junior wide receiver Malachi Coley led the team with 1,295 receiving yards and 11 touchdowns, also leading the nation with 975 yards after the catch and 40 broken tackles.

Containing Western Kentucky's prolific passing attack will be crucial to securing a difficult road test to open the season.

USF vs. Florida A&M, Sept. 9

Head coach: Willie Simmons (Sixth season)

Record in 2022: 9-2 (7-1 SWAC)

USF will open its home season when Florida A&M travels to Raymond James Stadium on Sept. 9. The Rattlers finished last season ranked 23rd in the FCS, the second highest subconference of DI football.

USF won 38-17 the last time

the teams met in 2021. The Bulls have never lost to the Rattlers, going 4-0 since their first meeting in 2005.

USF vs. No. 4 Alabama, Sept. 16
Head coach: Nick Saban (16th season)

Record in 2022: 11-2 (6-2 SEC)

By far the most difficult opponent the Bulls will face all season, Alabama begins the 2023 season ranked No. 4 in the country. The Crimson Tide boasted six All-American selections last season, highlighted by junior cornerback Kool-Aid McKinstry. McKinstry is considered to be one of the top prospects for the 2024 NFL Draft.

Alabama has yet to name a starting quarterback at the time of publication, with five scholarship quarterbacks on the roster including returning sophomore Jalen Milroe. Last season's starter, Bryce Young, was selected No. 1 overall in the 2023 NFL Draft.

Compiling a 194-27 record as head coach of the Crimson Tide,

Saban is widely considered to be one of the greatest coaches in college football history. Under Saban, Alabama has won five national championships and has produced 44 first round NFL draft picks. Last season, the Crimson Tide were

Historically, Alabama wreaks havoc on unranked teams. Since 2007, Saban has only lost once to an unranked team, which was a 41-38 loss against Texas A&M in 2021.

USF vs. Rice, Sept. 23
Head coach: Mike Bloomgren (Sixth season)
Record in 2022: 5-8 (3-5 CUSA)

AAC newcomer Rice bolstered its lineup with the highest ranked recruiting class in program history after competing in the first bowl game since 2014, yet are still widely projected to finish near last in the conference, according to Athlon Sports.

Senior transfer JT Daniels will start at quarterback for the Owls, a former five-star prospect who has previously spent time

with Georgia, USC and West Virginia.

USF at Navy, Sept. 30
Head coach: Brian Newberry (First season)
Record in 2022: 4-8 (4-4 AAC)

Navy boasted one of the top defenses in the country last season, finishing third in the nation in rushing yards allowed at 88.9 yards per game and third in first downs allowed with 187.

Their trademark triple-option offense poses a unique threat to the Bulls, who will have to staunchly defend the run in order to avoid being upset on the road. With their unique offense attack, Navy almost exclusively runs the ball, which is notoriously challenging to defend.

USF at UAB, Oct. 7
Head coach: Trent Dilfer (First season)
Record in 2022: 7-6 (4-4 CUSA)

■ See PREVIEW on PAGE 5

FREE



BIGGER & BETTER COOKIE

WITH ANY FULL SIZE COBBLER OR PUDDING PURCHASE!
MONDAY-THURSDAY ONLY WITH VALID USF ID
IN-STORE ONLY / CAN'T BE COMBINED WITH OTHER OFFERS



LATE NIGHT DELIVERY
UNTIL 1AM!

5003 E. FOWLER AVE SUITE A TAMPA, FL. 33617
WWW.PEACHCOBBLERFACTORY.COM

Full-Service On-Campus Banking

With the USF Bulls VISA® Debit Card.

Use for gas, travel, groceries, entertainment,
online purchases & more.



- Free digital banking
- Easy access for parents to make deposits and account access through 5,000 shared branches nationwide*
- 30,000 fee-free nationwide ATMs*

Join Online: usffcu.com/gobulls

* Through the CO-OP network.
Federally insured by NCUA.



PREVIEW

Continued from PAGE 4

UAB enjoyed a busy offseason, including joining the American Athletic Conference and hiring former NFL quarterback and ESPN analyst Trent Dilfer as head coach.

Senior running back Jermaine Brown Jr. is returning to the team after an All C-USA Second Team nod in 2022. Brown Jr. rushed for 948 yards, ranking fourth in the conference and added eight touchdowns last season.

Redshirt junior Jacob Zeno was named the Blazers starting quarterback. Zeno appeared in nine games last season, tossing five touchdowns.

USF vs. Florida Atlantic, Oct. 14

Head coach: Tom Herman
(First season)

Record in 2022: 5-7 (4-4
CUSA)

After UCF departed to the Big 12, Florida Atlantic joined the AAC to become the Bulls' presumed in-state rival.

FAU hired former Texas head coach Tom Herman, amassing a 32-18 record over four seasons. The Owls boast one of the top offenses in the conference, adding former Texas and Nebraska quarterback Casey Thompson. Senior running back Larry McCammon III earned preseason first team All-AAC honors after rushing for 1,547 yards and 15 touchdowns last season.

Thompson threw for 2,047 yards and 17 touchdowns in 10 starts last season for the Cornhuskers before joining his former coach in Boca Raton. The Owls will pose an offensive challenge for a rebuilding Bulls defense.

USF at UConn, Oct. 21

Head coach: Jim Mora
(Second season)

Record in 2022: 6-6

Huskies head coach Jim Mora spearheaded a dramatic transformation for the program in his first season, with UConn going from just one win in 2021 to an appearance in the 2022 Myrtle Beach Bowl.

UConn struggled with passing last season, however, with junior quarterback Ta'Quan Robinson suffering a season-ending ACL tear in the opening game. The Huskies recently named senior quarterback Joseph Fagnano as their starter after he transferred from Maine.

Fagnano passed for 2,231 yards and 15 touchdowns for the FCS Black Bears last season, who were coached by current Huskies' offensive coordinator Nick Charlton.

USF at Memphis, Nov. 4

Head coach: Ryan Silverfield
(Fourth season)

Record in 2022: 7-6 (3-5 AAC)

Memphis will return with one of the top quarterbacks in the conference in junior Seth Henigan, who compiled 3,571 passing yards and 22 touchdowns last season. Henigan was named to the Maxwell Award Watch List as well as the Manning Award Watch List, awarded to the nation's top quarterback.

Tight end Caden Preiskorn garnered All-AAC Second Team honors last season before transferring to Ole Miss.

The Tigers have particularly struggled in conference play under Silverfield, compiling an 11-13 record in AAC despite going 21-15 overall.

USF vs. Temple, Nov. 11

Head coach: Stan Drayton
(Second season)

Record in 2022: 3-9 (1-7 AAC)

After a 54-28 blowout loss last season that ultimately resulted in the firing of former head coach

Jeff Scott, USF will attempt to avenge its woes from 2022 against Temple.

Sophomore quarterback E.J. Warner impressed late last season after a rough start, winning AAC Rookie of the Year.

Warner threw for 3,028 yards and 18 touchdowns, becoming just the second player in program history to break the 3,000 yard mark.

USF at UTSA, Nov. 17

Head coach: Jeff Traylor
(Fourth season)

Record in 2022: 11-3 (8-0
CUSA)

In a difficult road tilt, the Bulls will travel to San Antonio to face the Roadrunners, who are among the top teams in the AAC.

Senior Frank Harris is one of the premier quarterbacks in the nation, who owns virtually every passing record in UTSA program history. Harris threw for 4,063 yards and 32 touchdowns last season, and was named Conference USA MVP.

UTSA defeated North Texas 48-27 to win the 2022 Conference USA Championship.

USF vs. Charlotte, Nov. 25

Head Coach: Biff Poggi
(First season)

Record in 2022: 3-9 (2-6 CUSA)

Charlotte will travel to USF for the Bulls' final home game of the season. The 49ers are expected to struggle this season, predicted to finish last in the conference by Athlon Sports.

With newly hired head coach Biff Poggi, the 49ers added 30 new transfers to the roster, including former senior Bethune-Cookman quarterback Jalon Jones. Redshirt junior running back Shadrick Byrd was an honorable mention to the All-Conference USA team as a kick returner.

THE ORACLE

CLICK HERE TO SUBSCRIBE TO
THE WEEKLY ROUNDUP

The Oracle's weekly e-newsletter

Defensive line coach says leading with heart is key to success

By Clinton Engelberger
EDITOR IN CHIEF

“Nobody has ever pushed any of these guys harder than what they’re pushed mentally or physically when they get in college. The higher up they climb, the thinner that air gets, the tougher and more rocky the climb gets... but [it’s about]

years on the track and field team.

Though Patrick said his first year playing football for his high school was intimidating, it taught him how to face adversity instead of hiding from it.

“I was thrown into the fire quickly as a freshman in high

[defensive] line the same thing, but I went into college thinking the same thing – if you can’t touch me, you can’t beat me. But if I touch you first, I’m gonna beat your a**.”

Patrick said he teaches his players based off of his

environment of a “football family” is just as important as the physical work each player puts in.

One way to strengthen those relationships off and on the field is through trust, Patrick said.

“It’s all about trust. If your players trust you, and they know you love and care about them, then you can coach them and you can get them to run through a brick wall,” he said.

“And I think as coaches, we first relate to him as players because we’re all players. I tell the [defensive] line all the time that I’m not gonna ask you to do anything that I wouldn’t do or I haven’t done myself. I’m not gonna tell you what the fire looks like or smells like, I’m gonna tell you what the fire feels like. But I’m also gonna be their advocate. We fight for them, we protect them, but we love them and we push them. If you can capture their hearts, you can capture their minds.”

USF football has faced many challenges over the past few years. Last season, former coach Jeff Scott was fired midseason, causing former Bulls interim coach Daniel DaPrato to finish out the season. The Bulls ended the season with only one win.

A challenge Patrick said he wants the team to overcome is knowing how to smartly pivot when injuries occur.

Last season, quarterback Gerry Bohanon suffered a season-ending shoulder injury against Tulane on Oct. 15.

Patrick said when injuries begin to plague the team, the players need to be patient and play smarter in order to come back stronger than before, rather than overexerting themselves and playing too hard.

“You’re gonna get bumped

■ See KEVIN PATRICK on PAGE 7



Defensive line coach Kevin Patrick was a part of USF football’s staff during the program’s first season of play in 1997. USF ATHLETICS PHOTO

understanding that you can endure a lot. You have to be able to fight through it.”

The foundation of Patrick’s athletic career began in 1985, where he played as a defensive lineman for Forest Hill High School in West Palm Beach until 1989. There, he spent four years on the football team and two

school, and I was thrown into a fire as a freshman in college for my first game. I remember walking on the field the first time against the varsity and thought “These guys are huge,” he said.

“And what I learned right then and there is something I carry on to this day, and I tell my

experience playing in high school and college, as he knows what the feeling of being a player on the field is like.

Besides remaining tough on the field, Patrick said it’s just as important to remain tough mentally. He said building personal relationships with players and creating an

Having joined the staff in 1996 for USF football’s first season the following year, defensive line coach Kevin Patrick said it has been a journey to watch the program endure its successes and failures.

“[The program] is like part of my family and it’s part of my legacy. We all came here at one point in time in 1996 to start this program and I’m proud of all the ups and downs,” he said.

“Not just all the good times – part of the program is they go through these ups and downs and that’s what projects growth, and we’ve done that. I think a program needs to do that to hit a sustainable level of standard.”

Patrick served as USF’s defensive ends coach for the first three years of the program, but left in 1998 to own and manage a medical billing company.

He returned in 2008 as a defensive ends coach before transitioning to a defensive line coach in 2009. He left the program again in 2012, but Patrick rejoined the staff in December and is the defensive line coach for this season.

Before coming to USF for the first time, Patrick played as a defensive end from 1989-93 at the University of Miami.

Patrick was a two-time national champion at Miami. He recorded the fifth-highest number of sacks in school history at 23 and made 174 tackles.

Patrick said his coaches there taught him one thing that he tries to teach his own players – perseverance.

“[My coaches taught me] that your mind and your body can get through a lot more than you think you can. One of the things I know my coach has always told me is you’ve got more to give,” he said.

now hiring
 TAMPA'S ORIGINAL EUROPEAN AND CRAFT BEER
 BAR AND BREWERY IS LOOKING FOR KITCHEN,
 DELI AND HOSTESS POSITIONS.

*Part time and full time.
 We work around your
 classes, day and evening
 shifts available. No need for
 a car, we are right around
 the corner from USF.
 Team trivia Tuesday evening
 at 7:00
 USF's biggest trivia night!*

MR. DUNDERBAK'S
 RESTAURANT AND BREWERY

Mr Dunderbak's Berganen,
 Restaurant and Brewery.
 813-977-4104
 Email: dunderbaks@yahoo.com.
 Or message us on Facebook.

**60 BEERS ON DRAFT &
 500 IN THE BOTTLE**

KEVIN PATRICK

Continued from PAGE 6

and bruised, you're gonna get hurt at some point in time and you have to take care of your body. But the biggest thing for these guys is they gotta keep their mind strong - the body will heal, it's very magical. But we've got to be able to endure that tough time going through those injuries," he said.

"Because it really tries you hard as a man, as a football player and just everything because you want to push and push and go and go. Sometimes you

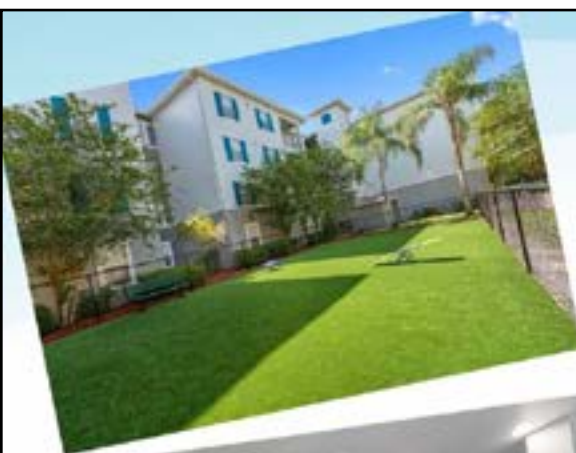
gotta be patient and keep feeding that body with some strong thoughts because you have to heal."

Though the focus is currently on the first game of this season, which takes place on Friday at Western Kentucky, Patrick said he also wants to make sure he makes an impact on his players that lasts long after they graduate from USF.

"[I want them] to be the best man, husband or father they could possibly be. I tell them that when

we recruit them and I tell them all that now," he said.

"I don't care what you do... you be the best man you can be, [and be] a good human. I think that's what we need more than anything in this world."

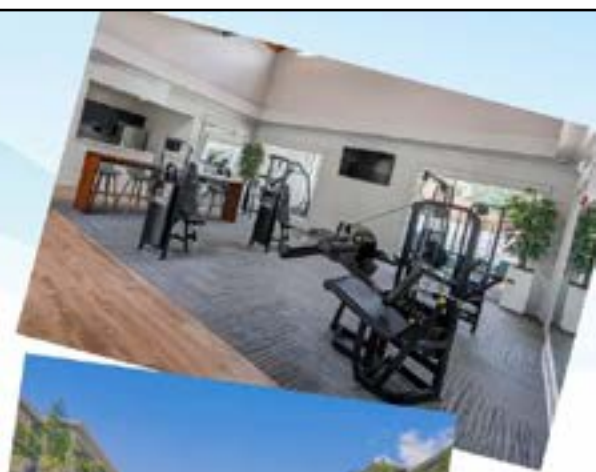


**Sign a Fall Lease for
 \$300 off your move-in!**

*Experience Quality Living In A
 Whole New Way!*

- 2 Community Pools and Spas
- 2 Community Fitness Centers
- 2 Study Lounges
- Private Bedrooms and Bathrooms
- Upgrade Options Available
- 24/7 Parcel Lockers
- Bark Park

www.vuetampa.com
 813-669-5576



USF FOOTBALL SCHEDULE



SEPT 2, 3:30PM
AT WESTERN KENTUCKY
 Houchens Industries-L.T. Smith
 Stadium



OCT 14, TBD
VS FAU
 Raymond James Stadium



SEPT 9, 7:00PM
VS FLORIDA A&M
 Raymond James Stadium



OCT 21, 3:30PM
AT CONNECTICUT
 Pratt & Whitney Stadium



SEPT 16, 3:30PM
VS ALABAMA
 Raymond James Stadium



NOV 4, TBD
AT MEMPHIS
 Liberty Bowl Memorial Stadium



SEPT 23, TBD
VS RICE
 Raymond James Stadium



NOV 11, TBD
VS TEMPLE
 Raymond James Stadium



SEPT 30, 3:30PM
VS NAVY
 Navy-Marine Corps Memorial Stadium



NOV 17, 9:00PM
AT UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS- SAN ANTONIO
 Alamo Dome



OCT 7, TBD
AT UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA- BIRMINGHAM
 Protective Stadium



NOV 25, TBD
VS CHARLOTTE
 Raymond James Stadium

Why these four football transfers joined USF

By Beatriz Gonzalez and Tim Katon
CORRESPONDENTS



For players like Tennessee transfer RJ Perry, coach Alex Golesh's open communication played a large role in their decision to transfer to USF. USF ATHLETICS PHOTO

After a poor 1-11 performance last year, South Florida's football team will be entering its latest season with a variety of new additions to the team.

During their time in the transfer portal, head coach Alex Golesh and his staff were able to recruit 49 new players, with 38 on scholarship. He said he focused on recruiting people that would best fit the team's culture.

"It's a ginormous puzzle because it's not so much talent acquisition, it's character acquisition. It's a locker room fit," Golesh said.

The Oracle spoke to four transfers to see why they decided to join the Bulls this year – here's what they said.

Nay'Quan Wright – Senior running back, UF

Coming from the University of Florida, senior running back Nay'Quan Wright joined South Florida in spring 2023.

When he entered the transfer portal in December, Wright had offers from the University of Colorado and the University of Louisville while in the NCAA transfer portal.

Golesh's efforts in recruiting reassured Wright that his transition to USF was the right one.

"As a recruiter, [Golesh] is high energy," Wright said. "He lets you know his plan and the system when talking about the offense. I [also] got to connect with the running back coach which was great."

During his 29 games with

the Gators, Wright totaled 688 rushing yards and three touchdowns. For his final season at Florida, he started four games as a running back.

While playing against USF on Sept. 19, Wright rushed for 37 yards and placed one touchdown against the Bulls.

Along with Golesh's reassurance, Wright said he enjoys the style of play USF has to offer with his position.

"This offense is pretty fast," Wright said. "I like how they use the running back out the back field. Last year, we didn't instill much using the running back in the past games like we did in previous years [at UF], so I like that."

He was recently one of five members at USF to be named

■ See TRANSFERS on PAGE 11

USF football holds event for special olympians

By Samantha Allen
CORRESPONDENT

USF football players traded their roles as athletes to become ambassadors, opening the doors to their indoor practice facility to 40 special olympians for an event called "Victory Day" on Aug. 20.

Head coach Alex Golesh took part in a similar event back at Iowa State as a tight ends coach and recruiting coordinator. Seeing its huge impact, he introduced it to Tampa. This was the first time the Bulls held this event, and it signifies the end of fall camp for the Bulls.

As each participant entered the facility, a member of the USF football team greeted them, standing by their side as buddies for the night.

Each duo went through six

■ See VICTORY DAY on PAGE 11



USF football welcomed special olympians for an evening of play on Aug. 20. ORACLE PHOTO/AARON MAMMAH

**BETA THETA
PI**



**FALL
RECRUITMENT
2023**

**PRESIDENT
JAYCEE PEREZ
786-374-1687**

**RECRUITMENT CHAIR
MARTIN ACHARD
314-403-2823**

**SCHOLARSHIP CHAIR
PATRICK BIEDERMANN
941-999-8419**



cru

HELPING YOU THRIVE

COMMUNITY RETREATS
FUN ACTIVITIES SPIRITUAL GROWTH
BIBLE STUDY SMALL GROUPS

 @CRUATUSF
TAMPABAYCRU.COM



CONNECT HERE

GET INVOLVED!

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

GET INVOLVED!





DO YOU LIKE TO SING OR BEATBOX?
JOIN USF'S CO-ED ACAPELLA GROUP!

tones of gold

<https://linktree/tonesofgold>
IG: @tonesofgold
usf.tonesofgold@gmail.com

ATTN: STUDENT ORGS...

FREE AD SPACE AVAILABLE

IN THE ORACLE

FOR ALL USF REGISTERED STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS, SPORT CLUBS AND FRATERNITY & SORORITY LIFE!

MUST BE REGISTERED IN BULLSCONNECT

CONTACT GLORIA FOR DETAILS
ORACLE-STUDENTORGADS@USF.EDU

TRANSFERS

Continued from PAGE 9

to the Athlon Sports 2023 preseason All-AAC Team.

RJ Perry – Junior offensive lineman, Tennessee

Having already experienced Golesh's style of coaching at Tennessee last season, junior offensive lineman RJ Perry joined the Bulls in spring 2023.

Totalling 20 career games with the Volunteers, Perry had redshirt eligibility for the 2021 season.

In his final year with the Volunteers, Perry played in 13 games where Tennessee had a record of 11-2, 6-2 SEC under Golesh and ranked sixth in the nation.

There was no doubt Golesh's impact lingered while Perry was in the transfer portal, causing him to want to continue his career under Golesh's leadership. "[Golesh] was great [at

Tennessee] and one of the main reasons I came here," Perry said.

Golesh's decision to move to USF was announced last December as the Vols were playing the Orange Bowl game.

In his 20-year career, Golesh has coached his teams to 12 bowl games. The first was in 2004 with Ohio State University.

With Golesh's record for playing bowl games, Perry saw an opportunity for a repeat when he joined USF.

"After the bowl game, I put my name in the portal [when] I found out coach Golesh left, so I was like, 'It's my time.' I knew I was going to come here as soon as they started texting me."

Bernard Gooden – Sophomore defensive lineman, Wake Forest

Sophomore defensive lineman Bernard Gooden joined USF from Wake Forest in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

Wake Forest finished last year with an 8-5 record, ending its season with a win in the Gasparilla Bowl against Missouri 27-17.

In his best collegiate season, Gooden played in 12 games. He recorded seven tackles, 1.5 tackles for loss and 0.5 sacks.

Gooden said defensive line coach Kevin Patrick was a factor in his decision to transfer from Wake Forest.

"[Patrick] definitely was a big part in why I wanted to come here because he didn't talk to me like another D-line coach," Gooden said.

"He was telling me things that I knew could further my game. So [Patrick] was definitely a big part."

Gooden also said Golesh's emphasis on building relationships with his players stood out to him.

"[Golesh] is a person that cares about all his players, whatever someone has going on,

he wants to make sure you are good," he said.

Doug Blue-Eli – Sophomore defensive lineman, TCU

Sophomore defensive lineman Doug Blue-Eli joined USF from TCU, the runner-up in the 2023 National Championship game.

Last season, as a redshirt freshman, he played in the first four games and recorded one tackle.

During the regular season, the Horned Frogs went 12-0 and were undefeated for the first time since 2010.

Before defensive line coach Kevin Patrick and Golesh recruited Blue-Eli, Bulls junior wideout – and his former Cherry Hill West High School teammate – Naiem Simmons reached out to him.

Simmons transferred to USF in December from Wagner College. USF was already a

school Blue-Eli had in mind, but the opportunity to reunite with his high school teammate helped him solidify his decision.

"[Simmons] asked me, 'What are things looking like for you?' And USF was one of the first schools I was thinking about," Blue-Eli said. "Golesh hit me up after that and got me on a visit."

After leaving the National Champion runners-up, Blue-Eli said he is optimistic about Golesh's style of coaching, as the team looks to have a better record than last year.

"I definitely think it's going to be a total change, Golesh and [Patrick] came to all of us with a vision," Blue-Eli said. "And from there on, I feel as though we have been doing everything they have said and working hard to try and flip things."



At one of the stations, participants competed in a throwing competition. ORACLE PHOTO/AARON MAMMAH

VICTORY DAY

Continued from PAGE 9

different activity stations. One station featured drills for ball-carrying, skills and coordination. Another allowed them to take fully geared-up media pictures, mimicking the ones showcased on the jumbotron during games. Other stations included practicing hand-offs and throwing the ball.

Some participants and players turned these activities into a friendly competition, challenging each other to see who could throw the farthest.

At one point, the players and participants played a mini-game. As each participant scored, USF's HOT band, cheer team and dance team, the Sundolls, celebrated with the same enthusiasm as a regular season game.

Golesh said this was his

favorite night of the year, and he plans to make it an annual tradition.

Since Aug. 1, the Bulls have been practicing and preparing for the upcoming season. Golesh said it was humbling to see how his players were engaged throughout the event.

"We've just worked for three and a half weeks and it's been straight [football]. So it's a way to reflect for the night and take a step back, count your blessings and appreciate what we do have here," he said.

Junior defensive lineman Rashad Cheney Jr. said he felt the joy produced from that night inspired the team.

"All [we've known] is football for the last three or four weeks... and to just bring a smile on everybody's face, it's a great opportunity," Cheney Jr. said.

After being busy from early

morning to night, sophomore offensive lineman Mike Lofton said he's happy to see new people enjoy their time and smile.

He said it brings happiness to his heart to see the team is making a difference.

"It's a very humbling experience for me and some of my teammates as well. Our coaches always say you have to be where your feet are and this is an eye-opening experience for me especially," Lofton said.

Jason Vaughn's rise to leadership

By Aaron Mammah
SPORTS EDITOR

The past few years have been rough for USF football, but in senior defensive lineman Jason Vaughn's eyes, everything happens for a reason.

He didn't receive a Division One scholarship offer as a high school senior at Miami Palmetto, but after a post-grad year at Academy Prep, he committed to TCU on Nov. 25, 2018. However, he would decommit and accept an offer from then-head coach Charlie Strong to play closer to home at USF.

"I feel like there was a lot of glamor and flashy lights and all this nice looking stuff. And that drew me [to TCU]," Vaughn said.

"Committing to USF gave my family the opportunity to come to see me play... that wouldn't have been able to happen if I was all the way in Fort Worth, Texas."

To Vaughn, family is everything. He is the second oldest of four brothers. He said he and his siblings bonded through their love of video games and being outdoors.

"There was always friendly competition between us. That's just how it is growing up with four brothers," Vaughn said.

Since joining the Bulls in 2019, he's seen the program evolve, particularly in its coaching.

Vaughn has played under three head coaches and four defensive coordinators throughout his career.

However, he doesn't see the coaching changes as a bad thing. Instead, he said he's glad that he has been able to learn different defensive schemes and hear different perspectives.

"It shows my versatility and what I can do, it made me feel

like I could be anywhere and be in a position to perform at a high level," Vaughn said.

In December, Alex Golesh was hired to take the head coach position for USF. When Vaughn met Golesh the following month, he said he remembered not knowing what to expect from the meeting.

When Golesh spoke to

felt like it was only right for me to take a chance on the program when it changes," Vaughn said.

Heading into the 2023 season, Vaughn is expected to build off of his strong campaign last season.

In 2022, he led the team with 8.5 tackles for loss and five sacks. His 35 tackles for the year ranked second among defensive

who was a freshman at the time, during the 2019 season. They bonded on and off the field as Reaves took him under his wing.

"I looked up to [Reaves] a lot as a big brother type, so I decided to just get it back for him," Vaughn said.

The number has multiple meanings to Vaughn. He said it represents his place as one of

to 247Sports. As one of the players who stayed during the Bulls' change of leadership, the coaching staff has challenged Vaughn to be a leader. He said he is still learning to be more vocal among the new players.

"I never really felt like a leader, but I am," Vaughn said. "So for me to embrace that role, and continue to pour into these young guys and try and show them how it's supposed to look. I think that's the biggest thing I want to do for them."

Special teams coordinator and outside linebacker coach Chad Creamer was hired in December with Golesh's inaugural staff. Creamer said he has seen the impact of Vaughn's presence in the locker room.

"He's been here for a while. He's a veteran so he's been around, he's seen change. He's seen a lot of coaches and guys that come through so he's experienced from that standpoint," Creamer said.

"Nothing really shakes him up and I think that he has been a calming force for guys that are new. They are experiencing a lot of different things and [Vaughn's] been there, done that. So I think that experience from his end has been huge."

Creamer said he sees Vaughn as a vital part of helping the Bulls reach their goals this season. They plan to use him in different roles because of his versatility as a pass rusher and his ability to play in space.

"Obviously, we have high expectations for him and are excited to see his hard work pay off because he's put in the time, he's worked his butt off," Creamer said.

"Since we've been here in December... he's put himself in a position to have a great year and help us defensively and as a team strive to reach our goals."



Senior defensive end Jason Vaughn looks to build off of his breakout 2022 campaign. USF ATHLETICS

PHOTO

Vaughn and his teammates about transforming the team's culture, Vaughn knew he had to honor the commitment he made to the program when he signed on five years ago.

"I just think that for this school to take a chance on me, a guy with no offers out of high school, had to go prep school, I

linemen.

During the offseason, he was one of four Bulls to make an Athlon Preseason All-AAC team.

He recently switched his jersey number from 40 to four, becoming the first Bull to wear the number since Greg Reaves. Reaves was the senior defensive end playing ahead of Vaughn,

four brothers and also that he has completed four collegiate seasons.

Vaughn's experiences with the program and tight-knit bond with his brothers have given him a perspective that he shares with younger players.

After Golesh's hiring date, 24 players transferred, according



ROSTER



/ FULL NAME / POSITION / YEAR

0 / Daquan Evans / DB / Sr.	11 / D.J. Harris / DE / So.	23 / Kendall Dennis / CB / So.
0 / Jayson Littlejohn / TE / Sr.	12 / Jaden Alexis / WR / So.	23 / Kenny Walker / RB / Fr.
1 / Khafre Brown / WR / Jr.	12 / Ben Knox / CB / Jr.	24 / Mac Harris / LB / So.
1 / Matthew Hill / Safety / Sr.	13 / Doug Blue-Eli / DL / So.	25 / Dominic Gonnella / RB / Sr.
2 / Michel Dukes / RB / Sr.	13 / Israel Carter / QB / Fr.	25 / Christopher Townsel / DB / Jr.
3 / Bernard Gooden / DL / So.	14 / Michael Williams II / DE / Fr. (Rs.)	26 / Tavin Ward / DB / Fr. (Rs.)
3 / Kelley Joiner Jr. / RB / Sr.	15 / Jayden Curry / DB / Jr.	27 / Tawfiq Byard / Safety / Fr.
4 / Seth Jones / WR / Jr.	15 / Tyree Kelly / WR / Fr.	28 / Jarvis Lee Jr. / CB / Fr.
4 / Jason Vaughn / DE / Sr.	16 / Ryan Bolduc / QB / Jr.	29 / Brian Norris / LB / Grad. Student
5 / Tramel Logan / DE / Jr.	16 / Stantavious Smith / DT / Fr.	30 / JaBari Roberson / CB / Sr.
5 / Nay'Quan Wright / RB / Sr.	17 / Byrum Brown / QB / Fr. (Rs.)	31 / Pierse Stainton / Punter / Fr. (Rs.)
6 / Michael Brown-Stephens / WR / G.S.	17 / Jhalyn Shuler / LB / Sr.	33 / Timarcus "T-Mac" Simpson / Safety / Sr.
6 / Immanuel Hickman / DE / Sr.	18 / Braxton Clark / CB / G.S.	34 / Rico Watson / DL / Sr.
7 / Will Jones II / Safety / Jr.	18 / Weston Wolff / TE / So.	35 / Chris Thomas / Safety / Fr. (Rs.)
7 / Naiem Simmons / WR / Jr.	19 / Jamie Pettway / LB / Jr.	36 / Andrew Stokes / Punter / Jr.
8 / Bryce Archie / QB / Fr. (Rs)	19 / Javohn Thomas / WR / Fr. (Rs.)	37 / Logan Berryhill / Safety / Jr.
8 / DJ Gordon IV / LB / Jr.	20 / Jaylen Johnson / RB / Fr.	38 / Sean Atkins / WR / Jr.
9 / Aamaris Brown / DB / Jr.	20 / Jameel Sanders / DB / So.	39 / John Cannon / Kicker / So.
9 / Yusuf Terry / WR / Jr.	21 / JeyQuan Smith / WR / Fr.	40 / Ty Ippolito / Kicker / Fr.
10 / Jonathan Ross / DE / Sr.	21 / Jaelen Stokes / DB / So.	41 / Brendan Farrell / Kicker / Sr.
10 / Yasias Young / RB / So.	22 / Cole Dillon / Safety / Fr.	42 / Lewai Mitchell / Safety / So.
11 / Gerry Bohanon / QB / Sr.	22 / K'Wan Powell / RB / So.	44 / Jacquez Williams / DL / Fr. (Rs.)



ROSTER



/ FULL NAME / POSITION / YEAR

45 / CJ Ross / LB / So.	72 / Cole Best / OL / So.	98 / Danny Gonzalez / DT / Fr. (Rs.)
46 / Dylan Ridolph / LB / So.	73 / Donovan Jennings / OL / Gr.	99 / Lloyd Summerall / DE / Jr.
50 / Bryce Bernard / Long Snapper / Jr.	74 / Deonte Bowie / OL / So.	
51 / Zane Herring / OL / So.	75 / Andrew Kilfoyl / OL / So.	
52 / Trey Dubuc / Long Snapper / Fr.	76 / Nikola Milovac / OL / Fr.	
53 / De'Juan Sease / DT / Gr.	77 / Zach Perkins / OL / So.	
53 / Drew Cornelius / OL / So.	78 / Drew Perez / OL / Fr.	
54 / Amer Amer / LB / So.	80 / Brock Burnette / WR / Fr. (Rs.)	
55 / James Jenkins / OL / Fr.	81 / Keshawn Singleton / WR / Fr.	
55 / Andrew Mata'afa / LB / Sr.	82 / Damon Smith / WR / Jr.	
56 / Cole Skinner / OL / Sr.	83 / Ranod Smith / WR / Fr.	
58 / Reggie Johnson II / LB / Jr.	84 / Cade Roberts / WR / Fr. (Rs.)	
59 / Greg Otten / LB / Fr.	85 / Christian Helms / WR / Jr.	
61 / Gannon Lanning / OL / So.	86 / Gerard Edimo / TE / Fr.	
62 / Derek Bowman / OL / Jr.	87 / Gunnar Greenwald / TE / Jr.	
64 / Caysun Kinghorn / OL / Fr.	88 / Teigan Martin / TE / Fr.	
65 / Mike Lofton / OL / So.	89 / Colin Affleck / TE / Fr.	
66 / Gabriel Hahn / OL / So.	90 / Rashad Cheney Jr. / DL / Jr.	
67 / Kody Black / OL / Fr.	94 / Keeon Terrell / DE / So.	
68 / Ryan Warren / OL / Fr.	95 / Terrence Edmonds / DT / Fr.	
70 / RJ Perry / OL / Jr.	96 / Chad Elder / DE / Fr. (Rs.)	
71 / Derrell Bailey Jr. / Jr.	97 / Evan Dangler / LB / Fr. (Rs.)	