

2021 HUSKIE FOOTBALL

Saturday, Sept. 4, 2021 - 6:30 PM CT
Atlanta, Georgia • Bobby Dodd Stadium (55,000)



1
GAME



GEORGIA TECH

NIU

0-0	Overall Record	0-0
0-0	Conference Record	0-0
Geoff Collins	Head Coach	Thomas Hammock
Western Carolina '94	Alma Mater	NIU '02
21-26/4th	Career Record/Years	5-13/3rd
6-16/2nd	School Record/Years	Same



HUSKIE BITES

- The NIU Huskies open their 119th season of college football - and 53rd as a Football Bowl Subdivision program - on Saturday, Sept. 4 when they travel to Atlanta to take on Georgia Tech in the first meeting ever between the teams.
- NIU returns 22 starters, including 19 on offense and defense, in 2021. One notable exception is under center where the Huskies will replace two-year starting quarterback Ross Bowers.
- With players retaining their eligibility from a year ago, NIU's 2021 roster features 87 players classified as "freshmen." That group includes 44 newcomers, 33 "COVID" (second year) freshmen and 10 redshirt freshmen.
- Six seniors - five starters - elected to return for their "Super Senior" season in 2021, led by offensive lineman Brayden Patton. Linebackers Kyle Pugh and Lance Deveaux Jr., All-MAC wide receiver Tyrice Richie and four-year punter Matt Ference are the other returning 2020 senior starters.
- NIU head coach Thomas Hammock, a two-time first team CoSIDA Academic All-American who rushed for over 1,000 yards to lead the Huskies in both 2000 and 2001, begins his third season as head coach at his alma mater.
- Wide receiver Tyrice Richie caught 53 passes for 597 yards in 2020 en route to first team All-MAC honors, becoming just the eighth player in NIU history to record four 100-yard receiving games in a season. He accomplished the feat in just six games.
- In 2020, freshman Trayvon Rudolph went from walk-on to Freshman All-American. In just six games, he returned more kickoffs (30) for more yards (717) than any player in the nation and ranked 10th in the country in all-purpose yards per game.
- There are 16 different states and Canada represented on the Huskies' 114-man roster with Illinois natives making up 40 percent of the total. The roster includes six players from Georgia who will make the trip to their home state with NIU this weekend.
- Three of the eight transfers who joined the Huskies in 2021 - quarterback Rocky Lombardi (Michigan State), multi-purpose back Clint Ratkovich (Western Illinois) and tight end Miles Joiner (Youngstown State) - are expected to start on offense for the Huskies.

HUSKIE FOOTBALL FACTS

Head Coach.....	Thomas Hammock
Alma Mater/Year.....	NIU '02
Record at NIU/Years.....	5-13/1
Career Record/Years.....	Same
Basic Offense/Defense.....	Multiple/4-3
First Year of Football.....	1899
2020 Record/MAC Record/Finish.....	0-6/0-6/6th
All-Time Record.....	592-507-51
Last Bowl Game.....	2018 Cheribundi Roca Raton Bowl
.....	UAB 37, NIU 14
Bowl Appearances (FBS).....	13
MAC Championship Appearances, Last.....	8, 2018
MAC Championships, Last.....	5, 2018
Experience Returning/Lost.....	46/16
Starters Returning..22 (9 offense, 10 defense, 3 specialists)	
Starters Lost.....	5 (4 offense, 1 defense, 0 specialists)

NIU FACTS

Location.....	DeKalb, Illinois
Founded.....	1895
Enrollment.....	16,769
Affiliation.....	NCAA Football Bowl Subdivision
Conference.....	Mid-American (West Division)
Colors.....	Cardinal and Black
Nickname.....	Huskies
Stadium.....	Brigham Field at Huskie Stadium
Surface/Capacity.....	FieldTurf /23,595
President.....	Dr. Lisa Freeman
Assoc. VP/Athletic Director.....	Sean T. Frazier
Alma Mater, Year.....	Alabama '92
Tickets.....	815-753-PACK (7225)

2021 SCHEDULE

Day, Date	Opponent (TV)	Time (CT)
Sat., Sept. 4	at Georgia Tech (ACCN)	6:30 p.m.
Sat., Sept. 11	WYOMING (ESPN+)	12:30 p.m.
Sat., Sept. 18	at Michigan (BTN)	11 a.m.
Sat., Sept. 25	MAINE	TBA
Sat., Oct. 2	EASTERN MICHIGAN*	12:30 p.m.
Sat., Oct. 9	at Toledo* (CBSSN)	11 a.m.
Sat., Oct. 16	BOWLING GREEN*	TBA
Sat., Oct. 23	at Central Michigan*	TBA
Wed., Nov. 3	at Kent State* (ESPN2/U)	6 p.m.
Wed., Nov. 10	BALL STATE* (ESPN2/U/CBSSN)	6/7 p.m.
Wed., Nov. 17	at Buffalo* (ESPN2/U)	6 p.m.
Tues., Nov. 23	WESTERN MICHIGAN* (ESPNU/+)	6 p.m.
Sat., Dec. 4	MAC Championship (ESPN)	11 a.m.

*Mid-American Conference Game

ON SOCIAL

Twitter.....	@NIUathletics, @NIU Football
Instagram.....	niuhuskies, niufotball
Facebook.....	NIU Huskies, NIU Football
YouTube.....	NIU Athletics
LinkedIn.....	NIU Athletics

NIU HUSKIES 2021 FOOTBALL

WEEKLY MEDIA SCHEDULE

MONDAY MAC COACHES' ZOOM

- NIU Head Coach Thomas Hammock will be available on the MAC Coaches' Zoom every Monday from 9:40-9:50 a.m. (CT).
- Access to the audio and video recordings will be made available to media.
- For the complete schedule and access to the live Zoom link, contact NIU or the Mid-American Conference.

NIU WEEKLY PRESS CONFERENCE

- NIU will host a weekly IN PERSON press conference with Thomas Hammock and several Huskie players throughout the season.
- The first press conference will be Tuesday, Aug. 31, beginning at NOON CT in the McCareins Auditorium (2nd floor) of the Yordon Center.
- Video of the press conference will be posted on the NIU Athletics' YouTube Channel and made available to media for download upon request.
- Watch the press conference live on Facebook and later on NIUHuskies.com.

NIU PLAYER & COACH AVAILABILITY

- Huskie players and coaches are available for interviews Monday through Thursday for all Saturday game weeks.
- Contact the NIU Athletics Communications Office to arrange in-person, phone or Zoom interviews.
- Please provide 24-hour notice for phone requests.
- Contact Joe Summins (players) or Donna Turner (coaches) to arrange interviews.

PRACTICE COVERAGE

- NIU practices on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, held in the mornings at Huskie Stadium and/or the Chessick Practice Center, are open to the media.
- Media are asked to remain in the end zone and to inform NIU Athletics Communications in advance if you plan to attend.
- Video shooting times are limited to the first 30 minutes of practice.

INFORMATION, VIDEO & PHOTO REQUESTS

- To be added to the NIU AthComm e-mail distribution list (media only), contact Donna Turner.
- Contact Joe Summins to request photos and/or video.
- Information on all MAC teams, including releases, depth charts and photos, logos, league stats and more are available online at CollegePressBox.com. Media can register for access at collegepressbox.com/register.
- Media should contact NIU or the MAC Office to obtain login information.

NIU ATHLETICS COMMUNICATIONS

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NOTING NIU

FULL SLATE: After playing a six-game, all Mid-American Conference schedule in November and December last year, NIU and the rest of the MAC return to a full 12-game slate in 2021. The Huskies faced their five MAC West foes and played one crossover game versus the East Division in 2020. While teams across the country saw games cancelled due to COVID-19, NIU went through the entire season without one player contracting the coronavirus.

LID LIFTERS: NIU is 19-33 in season-opening games as a Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) program. The Huskies fell to Buffalo on November 4, 2020 in the latest confirmed season opener in school history during the six-game league-only schedule. NIU defeated Illinois State, 24-10, in Thomas Hammock's debut as head coach to open the 2019 schedule.

DOG BONES: NIU has been collecting "Boneyard Wins" over prominent opponents and teams from leagues now designated as "Power 5" since 1983. The Huskies have 16 Boneyard Wins since 1983, including eight since 2009. NIU's last Boneyard Win was a 7-6 triumph at BYU on Oct. 27, 2018.

PEACH STATE DEBUT: Saturday's game at Georgia Tech marks the first time NIU has played a game in the state of Georgia, and the first time NIU has faced a team from the state of Georgia.

AGAINST THE ACC: The Huskies are 2-8 all-time versus teams from the Atlantic Coast Conference, including losses to Florida State in the 2012 Orange Bowl and to Duke in the 2017 Quick Lane Bowl. NIU's ACC wins came versus Wake Forest, 42-41, in Huskie Stadium in 2002 and over 15th-ranked Maryland, 20-13, in overtime in 2003 at home. NIU is 1-1 against Wake Forest, 0-2 against both Boston College and FSU and lost its only meetings with N.C. State and Duke. NIU's most recent clash versus an ACC opponent was on Sept. 22, 2018 at Florida State.

SWEET GEORGIA BROWN ... and Myles, Lafayette, McGee, Pinkney and Hamm: The Huskies' 2021 roster includes six Georgia products, including Savannah running back Antario Brown, the highest rated recruit in program history. Four of the Georgians are new to DeKalb in 2021, including UCF transfer Jalen Pinkney, while defensive backs Devin Lafayette and Myles McGee are second-year Huskies. The complete list:

No.	Name	Pos.	Elig.	Hometown	High School/Previous
3	Devin Lafayette	S	Fr.-C	Brunswick	Brunswick
13	Myles McGee	CB	Fr.-C	Canton	Sequoyah
15	Ty Myles	CB	Fr.	Blackshear	Pierce County
18	Elijah Hamm	LB	Fr.	Watkinsville	Oconee County
26	Antario Brown	RB	Fr.	Savannah	Beach
54	Jalen Pinkney	DL	Jr.	Norcross	Norcross/UCF

DOMINO EFFECT: In some ways, Thomas Hammock has Georgia Tech head coach Geoff Collins and the Yellow Jackets to thank for earning his opportunity to be the head coach at NIU. Hammock got the job in January 2019 when former Huskie head coach Rod Carey departed DeKalb to become the head coach at Temple. That opening came up when Collins left Temple to take over at Georgia Tech.

NIU BONEYARD WINS

Year	Opponent	H/A	Score	Opp Rank
1983	Kansas	A	37-34	—
1988	Wisconsin	A	19-17	—
1989	Kansas State	A	37-20	—
1990	Kansas State	H	42-35	—
2002	Wake Forest	H	42-41	—
2003	Maryland	H	20-13	15
2003	Alabama	A	19-16	21
2003	Iowa State	H	24-16	—
2009	Purdue	A	28-20	—
2010	Minnesota	A	34-23	—
2012	Kansas	H	30-23	—
2013	Iowa	A	30-27	—
2013	Purdue	A	55-24	—
2014	Northwestern	A	23-15	—
2017	Nebraska	A	21-17	—
2018	BYU	A	7-6	—

NIU HUSKIES 2021 FOOTBALL

LAND OF LINCOLN LEADERS: Since 2010, NIU is the winningest of the three FBS program in Illinois with a .641 winning percentage and a 91-51 record. Northwestern comes in with a 79-58 record for a .577 win percentage over the last 11 seasons, while Illinois is 48-84 (.364). The Huskies defeated Northwestern in the teams' most recent meeting in 2014, and dropped a 28-22 decision to Illinois in 2010 the last time those teams met. NIU has played in eight bowl games and a record seven MAC Championship games during the same time span.

LEADERS OF THE PACK: Six players were elected team captains for 2021, including newcomers Rocky Lombardi (QB) and Clint Ratkovich (RB). Super seniors Lance Deveaux Jr. (LB) and Brayden Patton (C) and third-year players Nick Rattin (LB) and James Ester (DT) round out the group. This is the first year under Hammock that NIU has selected captains prior to the season.

STAFF ADDITION: The 2021 NIU full-time coaching staff features one newcomer as Huskie alum Jason Onyebuagu joined the staff as tight ends coach. Onyebuagu, a four-year starter on the NIU offensive line from 2006-09, was Hammock's first recruit during the head coach's 2005-06 stint as an NIU assistant coach. He joins fellow Huskie alumni Hammock and defensive ends coach Travis Moore on the 2021 staff.

CANTON CAN: The four freshmen on NIU's roster from Canton hail from three different states. Safety C.J. Brown and defensive end Ivan Davis are from two different high schools in Canton, Michigan; defensive tackle Jacob Waskow is from Canton, Illinois and cornerback Myles McGee is from Canton, Georgia. Who knew there were at least 22 states with cities or towns named Canton in the United States.

STARTING BLOCKS: NIU has eight active players on the roster with eight or more career starts, including five players on offense and three on defense. Brayden Patton is NIU's most experienced starter with 26 career starts, while wide receiver Cole Tucker has started 19 games as a Huskie, followed by OT Marques Cox and LB Lance Deveaux Jr. with 16 starts each. LB Nick Rattin and WR Tyrice Richie check in with 12 starts apiece with S Dillon Thomas (9) and OG Logan Zschernitz (8) rounding out the list.

NEW TO NIU: NIU brought in eight transfers for 2021; three are listed as starters for the Huskie offense and all eight are slated to make the trip to Atlanta. Junior quarterback Rocky Lombardi (Michigan State), multi-purpose back Clint Ratkovich (Western Illinois) and tight end Miles Joiner (Youngstown State) all ranked first at their respective positions following fall camp. Also expected to see action is freshman linebacker Dayven Shinhoster, who transferred to NIU after initially enrolling at Nebraska-Kearney. (see complete list on personnel chart)

FR.-C: NIU's roster includes 33 "COVID" or second year freshmen, designated as Fr.-C on NIU printed materials. The team's 87 total "freshmen" includes 2020 and 2021 high school grads, as well as redshirt freshmen who played in four or less games in 2019. The 33 2020 high school grads started their collegiate careers without a traditional preseason, going through online classes and with no fans in the stands. Eighteen COVID-19 freshmen saw action during NIU's six-game 2020 season, and six started four or more of the Huskies' games.

HUSKIES IN THE PROS

Eight Huskies are on active NFL rosters as of Aug. 30, one with the Atlanta Falcons, three playing for new teams this season and two Huskies reunited in Houston. Wide receiver Christian Blake enters his fourth season with the Falcons, while his former teammate Kenny Golladay signed with the New York Giants after four years in Detroit. Jordan Steckler, who was on the Patriots practice squad early in 2020, joined Max Scharping in Houston this season. Jimmie Ward begins his eighth season with the 49ers and Rashaan Melvin is in his eighth active season with his seventh team and Chad Beebe is his fourth in Minnesota.

National Football League

Minnesota Vikings.....	Chad Beebe (WR)
Atlanta Falcons.....	Christian Blake (WR)
New York Giants.....	Kenny Golladay (WR)
Green Bay Packers.....	Jack Heflin (DL)
Carolina Panthers.....	Rashaan Melvin (CB)
Houston Texans.....	Max Scharping (OL)
Houston Texans.....	Jordan Steckler (OL)
San Francisco 49ers.....	Jimmie Ward (S)



FOLLOW THE HUSKIES

TV: NIU-GEORGIA TECH ON ACC NETWORK

- The NIU-Georgia Tech game will air live on ACC Network (ACCN). ACCN can be streamed live online in the ESPN App. Access requires that your pay TV provider carries ACCN.
- Current ACCN providers include AT&T TV, DirecTV, DISH, fuboTV, Hulu Live TV, Optimum, Sling TV, Spectrum TV and YouTube TV
- Dave O'Brien (play-by-play) and Tim Hasselbeck (color analyst) will be on the call for ACCN Saturday with sideline reporter Kelsey Riggs.

RADIO: HUSKIE SPORTS NETWORK

- The Huskie Sports Radio Network broadcast for the Georgia Tech game begins at 6 p.m. CT, 30 minutes before kickoff.
- The game will be carried on NIU network affiliates WLBK AM 1360/FM 98.9 (DeKalb), AM 560 The Answer (Chicago) and Sports Fan Radio AM 1330 (Rockford).
- Hear the broadcast online via Huskie All Access, and on mobile devices via the FREE NIU Huskies Mobile app or The Varsity Network app.
- Bill Baker begins his 42nd season as the radio play-by-play "Voice of the Huskies." Color analyst Mark Lindo completes his 36th consecutive season, while Andy Garcia is in his ninth season on the NIU sidelines.

INSIDE HUSKIE FOOTBALL RADIO SHOW

- Fans are invited to attend the one-hour weekly show every Monday at Noon at El Jimador Mexican Grill in DeKalb (260 E. Lincoln Hwy).
- Listen live on the NIU Huskies mobile app and hear the show Monday at 7 p.m. on WLBK AM 1360/FM 98.9 in DeKalb.
- Host Bill Baker welcomes NIU Head Coach Thomas Hammock each week, along with Huskie players and special guests.

NIU WEEKLY ON YOUTUBE

- The show features weekly interviews with the NIU football staff, including head coach Thomas Hammock, his assistants and staff, as well as NIU coaches of other sports and guests.
- Watch new episodes on the NIU Athletics YouTube Channel on Thursday nights.
- The show is hosted by Andy Garcia and NIU Director of Athletics Sean T. Frazier.

NIU ATHLETICS ON YOUTUBE

- See weekly and post-game press conferences, video features, highlights of past games and more.
- Subscribe for FREE and click the bell to be notified every time NIU posts a new video.
- Search "NIU Athletics" on YouTube.com.
- Archived videos and highlights, replays of some of the greatest games in school history and special features are also available 24/7 on YouTube.

NEW! NIU HUSKIES MOBILE APP

- Download the new, free NIU Huskies mobile app from the Apple Store or Google Play.
- Link to the NIU radio broadcasts, live stats, complete team rosters, digital game programs and more.
- Connect to the NIU social media channels and sign up for notifications on any Huskie team.

NIU HUSKIES 2021 FOOTBALL

WALK-ON U: Thomas Hammock has made a habit of rewarding players who walk-on to the Huskie program with scholarships. The list of former walk-ons includes players like senior punter Matt Ference, holder of nearly every NIU punting record, and current impact players like Nick Rattin, Devonte O'Malley, Trayvon Rudolph and Jordan Gandy. During 2021 preseason camp, offensive lineman Matthew Schooley and tailback Mason Blakemore were awarded scholarships. They join a long and distinguished list of NIU players from the past that arrived as walk-ons including 2010 MAC MVP Chad Spann and NFL veteran Rashaan Melvin.

WATCH OUT: Four Huskies garnered recognition on one or more preseason watch list over the summer. Tailback Harrison Waylee (Doak Walker), center Brayden Patton (Rimington Award), Matt Ference (Ray Guy) and running back Clint Ratkovich (Paul Hornung) were each tabbed with preseason honors. Ratkovich was also recognized as a player to watch by the Senior Bowl.

NO (NIU) ATTEMPTS: NIU does not return a single quarterback who has completed a pass as a Huskie. Of the five quarterbacks on the 2021 roster, two are first-year freshmen (Ethan Hampton and Jeffery Lowery) and two are transfers (Rocky Lombardi, Michigan State and Ryan Yost, Wagner). Second-year freshman Dustin Fletcher is the only quarterback who was on the Huskie roster in 2020. He played in three games a year ago but was used primarily as a runner (16 carries, 99 yards) and was sacked on his only pass attempt.

HE'S NO ROOKIE: While Rocky Lombardi has not thrown an official pass as a Huskie, he started nine games and played in 22 over the last three seasons at Michigan State. The Iowa native, whose grandfather Bob was a hall of fame coach in the Illinois high school ranks, completed 159-of-332 passes for 1,902 yards with 11 TDs and 14 interceptions from 2018-20 at MSU and was a 1,000-yard passer in 2020.

SUPER SENIOR: Wide receiver Tyrice Richie returns for his third year at NIU after a breakout season in 2020 led to first team All-MAC honors. In 17 career games, Richie became the 36th player in school history to pass the 1,000-yard mark in receiving yards. He totaled nearly 600 receiving yards in NIU's six games last year and led the MAC in catches per game with 8.8. With 100-yard games versus Ball State, Western Michigan and Toledo, Richie was the first NIU player since Darrell Hill in 2001 to post three consecutive 100-yard receiving games and was the first player since current New York Giants receiver Kenny Golladay with four 100-yard games in a season.

SUCCESS STORY: Tyrice Richie achieved another milestone as he is NIU's 2021 nominee for the William Campbell Trophy, presented by the National Football Foundation to the top football Scholar-Athlete in the country. Richie, who went to junior college out of Homewood-Flossmoor High school to get his academics in order, has compiled a cumulative GPA of 3.24 in sport management and is set to graduate from NIU in December.

JACK OF ALL TRADES: The biggest question mark about transfer Clint Ratkovich is where to list him in terms of position. He arrived at NIU in the spring after graduating from Western Illinois with his engineering degree and quickly established himself as the strongest player on the Huskie team with a 607-pound squad and a 409 bench press. Ratkovich was a two-time first team All-Missouri Valley Football Conference player for the Leathernecks who compiled 1,204 receiving yards on 128 catches and rushed for 429 yards on 97 carries in three seasons.

DEEP BACKFIELD: A year ago, just two Huskies gained more than 100 yards rushing on the season and NIU had only one player - true freshman Harrison Waylee - with more than 200 yards. Thomas Hammock, who ran for 195 yards versus Central Michigan as a Huskie in 2001, and watched his teammate Michael Turner run roughshod over the MAC in 2002 and 2003, is ready to see those kind of numbers next to NIU backs' names again. The Huskies will travel seven running backs to Georgia, with returnees Waylee and Erin Collins joined by a trio of freshmen and two transfers. 2020 signee Jay Ducker, a former Gatorade Player of the Year in Nebraska, is set to make his NIU debut, while true freshmen Antario Brown and Mason Blakemore have impressed in fall camp. Running back is just one spot grad transfer Clint Ratkovich could line up with Youngstown State transfer Braxton Chapman rounding out the group.

TIGHT END TALE: Two years ago, NIU tight ends Daniel Crawford and Mitchell Brinkman combined for 71 catches, 888 receiving yards and five touchdowns; Crawford added 21 catches for 183 yards and a score in six games last season before graduating with his master's degree. That leaves NIU without a tight end on the 2021 roster who has caught a pass for the Huskies. The Huskies' top quartet at the position includes Youngstown State transfer Miles Joiner, who caught 33 passes for 521 yards and seven TDs in 22 games for the Penguins. Junior Liam Soraghan is NIU's most experienced returnee at the position who has played in each of NIU's last 18 games. A pair of players converted from other positions are also in the mix as Tristen Tewes returns to tight end after filling in at linebacker for NIU in 2020, while Drew Cassens served as the Huskies' scout team quarterback last year.

BY THE NUMBERS

- 2 100-yard rushing games in five starts by freshman Harrison Waylee in 2020
- 4 NIU MAC Championships since 2011
- 5 INTs by the Huskie defense in six games in 2020, most in a season since 2018 (8) in 14 games
- 6 Georgia natives on the 2021 NIU roster
- 16 Different states and Canada represented on the 2021 Huskie football roster
- 22 Returning starters for the Huskies
- 41.5 School-record career punt average by senior Matt Ference
- 44 First-year collegiate football players on NIU's squad
- 44 Consecutive PATs made by kicker John Richardson (44-for-44)
- 46 Huskies from the state of Illinois on the 2021 roster
- 118 Seasons of college football played by NIU
- 597 Receiving yards by Tyrice Richie in 2020, a career best
- 717 Yards on 30 kickoff returns by Trayvon Rudolph in 2020, which ranks sixth all-time at NIU
- 1,150 Games played all-time by the Huskies
- 2,432 Career rushing yards for head coach Thomas Hammock (1999-2002) to rank 13th at NIU

ROSTER BREAKDOWN

BY CLASS	Off.	Def.	Spec.	Total
Senior	3	3	1	7
Junior	6	4	1	11
Sophomore	4	4	1	9
Freshman (R)	7	3	0	10
Freshman (C)	15	17	1	33
Freshman	19	23	2	44

BY POSITION

Offensive Line.....	19
Tight End.....	8
Fullback.....	2
Wide Receiver.....	13
Running Back.....	7
Quarterback.....	5
Defensive End.....	10
Defensive Tackle.....	9
Defensive Back.....	1
Linebacker.....	15
Safety.....	9
Cornerback.....	10
Kicker/Punter.....	4
Long Snapper.....	2

NIU HUSKIES 2021 FOOTBALL

GEORGIA TECH YELLOWJACKETS

2020 Record.....3-7
 Atlantic Coast Conference Record/Finish 3-6/11th
 Head Coach (Alma Mater/Year) Geoff Collins
 (Western Carolina/1994)
 Record at Georgia Tech/Years..... 6-16/Two
 Career Record/Years 21-26/Four
 Location.....Atlanta, Ga.
 Enrollment.....39,772
 Conference.....Atlantic Coast, Coastal
 Colors.....Tech Gold and White
 Stadium.....Bobby Dodd Stadium at Historic Grant Field
 Surface/Capacity..... Legion NXT Turf /55,000
 President.....Dr. Ángel Gabrera
 Athletic DirectorTodd Stansbury
 Athletics Website.....RamblingWreck.com
 Twitter.....@GeorgiaTechFB
 Ticket Information.....888-TECHTIX

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2021 GEORGIA TECH SCHEDULE

Day, Date	Opponent (TV)	Time (CT)
Sat., Sept. 4	NIU (ACCN)	6:30 p.m.
Sat., Sept. 11	Kennesaw State (RSN)	11 a.m.
Sat., Sept. 18	at Clemson* (ABC/ESPN)	2:30 p.m.
Sat., Sept. 25	North Carolina*	TBA
Sat., Oct. 2	Pitt*	TBA
Sat., Oct. 9	at Duke*	TBA
Sat., Oct. 23	at Virginia*	TBA
Sat., Oct. 30	Virginia Tech	TBA
Sat., Nov. 6	at Miami*	TBA
Sat., Nov. 13	Boston College*	TBA
Sat., Nov. 20	at Notre Dame* (NBC)	1:30 p.m.
Sat., Nov. 27	Georgia	TBA

*-Atlantic Coast Conference Game

LINE IT UP: The five players who started the last three games of 2020 for the NIU offensive line are all back in 2021, led by center Brayden Patton, a Rimington Trophy candidate who has started at guard and center during his Huskie career. He is flanked by third-year freshman Logan Zschernitz and second-year freshman John Champe at guard, with third-year freshman J.J. Lippe also challenging for a spot in the middle. Marques Cox - a 16-game starter at tackle - and Nolan Potter, who earned his first starts last year, are the projected tackles.

ELDER STATESMEN: Of the 14 players listed as linebackers on the NIU roster, 12 are freshmen and three of those (Eddie Jackson, Jaden Dolphin, Daveren Rayner) are returning or "COVID" freshmen. Sixth year senior Lance Deveaux Jr. and third year sophomore Nick Rattin are the clear leaders of the room with 176 combined tackles, 106 by Deveaux in 33 career games. The Florida native and elder statesmen has played in just one game over the last two seasons, missing the entire 2019 season with a knee injury and going down again after playing in the season opener in 2020. He made a career high 67 stops in 2018.

GANDY MAN: DeKalb native Jordan Gandy made a big impact on the Huskies in 2020 after transferring back to his hometown school from South Dakota State. Gandy led NIU in tackles (41) and passes defended (8) while starting all six games at cornerback in 2020 en route to second team All-MAC honors. He twice made 11 tackles in a game and recorded five pass break-ups versus Western Michigan.

HUSKIE PRIDE: As a two-time Academic All-American, Thomas Hammock's emphasis on academic success and graduation is real, and he has the numbers to prove it. Over the last three semesters, Hammock's Huskies have posted the best cumulative team GPAs in school history, compiling a school record 3.08 GPA for the spring 2021 semester.

GRADS: The NIU roster includes 14 players who have already earned their undergraduate degrees - either at NIU or from another institution, and one who already has two degrees. The list is topped by punter Matt Ference, who is currently pursuing his third degree from NIU. Transfers Braxton Chapman, Miles Joiner, Rocky Lombardi, Luke Mallette and Clint Ratkovich all came to NIU with degrees from their previous institutions. Erik Abrell, Erin Collins, Lance Deveaux Jr., Michael Kennedy, Brayden Patton, Kyle Pugh, Dillon Thomas and Cole Tucker are Huskie alumni.

ALL THE RECORDS: Fifth-year punter Matt Ference already holds nearly every NIU season and career punting record. His 265 career punts have traveled just under 6.25 miles (that's 10,994 yards). Nearly a third of his punts (86) have forced opponents to start inside their own 20 yard line. The only single season record left standing is Andy Dittbenner's 2007 mark for single season average (43.5).

NIU LEADING RETURNERS

2020 Statistics

Rushing	GP	Att.	Yds.	Avg.	TD
Harrison Waylee	6	107	456	4.3	1
Erin Collins	6	50	192	3.8	4
Receiving	GP	Rec.	Yds.	Avg.	TD
Tyrice Richie	6	53	597	11.3	4
Trayvon Rudolph	6	14	232	16.6	0
Cole Tucker	6	13	136	10.5	2
Punting	GP	No.	Yds	Avg.	Long
Matt Ference	6	31	1,308	42.2	60
Tackles	GP	UT-AT-Total	TFL-Yds.	QS-Yds.	INT-PBU
Jordan Gandy	6	25-16-41	0.0-0	0.0-0	1-7
Devin Lafayette	6	21-15-36	1.0-8	1.0-8	1-1
Kyle Pugh	5	14-22-36	3.5-14	1.5-10	0-0

Career Statistics

GP	Att.	Yds.	Avg.	TD
6	107	456	4.3	1
6	50	192	3.8	4
GP	Rec.	Yds.	Avg.	TD
17	85	1,012	11.9	8
6	14	232	16.6	0
32	69	823	11.9	3
GP	No.	Yds	Avg.	Long
45	265	10,994	41.5	70
GP	UT-AT-Total	TFL-Yds.	QS-Yds.	PD
6	25-16-41	0.0-0	0.0-0	8
6	21-15-36	1.0-8	1.0-8	2
34	96-90-186	12.5-41	3.0-23	4

Career Games Played: 45 - Matt Ference (P); 35 - Brayden Patton (OL); 34 - Lance Deveaux Jr. (LB)
 Career Games Started: 26 - Brayden Patton (OL)

NIU HUSKIES 2021 FOOTBALL

Pronunciations

Name.....	Pronunciation
AKANIMO ASUQUO.....	Ah-kuh-NEE-moh Uh-SOO-qwo
Erik ABRELL.....	AY-brull
Tony AGYAPONG.....	AGG-a-PONG
Brett BOSTAD.....	BO-stadd
ANTARIO Brown.....	on-TARE-ee-oh
Tyler BRUECKNER.....	BRECK-ner
John CHAMPE.....	CHAMP (e is silent)
MARQUES Cox.....	Marcus
Lance DEVEAUX Jr.....	duh-VOE
JADEN Dolphin.....	JAY-den
LEIF ENGSTRAND.....	LEAF ANG-strand
Matt FERENCE.....	FARE-ents
Marko GBEDO.....	Guh-BEE-doe
Drew HOTH.....	HOETH (long o)
Jack HUGUNIN.....	HUE-guh-NIN
Muhammed JAMMEH.....	Juh-MAY
Blake KOSIN.....	KOH-sin
Devin LAFAYETTE.....	Lah-FAY-ett
Trevor LAFFIN.....	LAUGH-in
Brock LAMPE.....	LAMP-ee
J.J. LIPPE.....	LIP-ee
Luke MALLETTE.....	Muh-LETT
ZHAMAINE March.....	szuh-MAIN
DEVONTE O'Malley.....	Duh-VOHN-tay
MAKHI Nelson-Douglas.....	Muh-KY
Pete NYGRA.....	NIE-gruh
James ONGTENGCO.....	on-TANG-oh
Pierce OPPONG.....	OH-pong
IZUCHUKWU OZOH.....	Izz-oo-CHOOK-woo
Tyler PITCEL.....	PIT-sul
JASHON PROPHETE.....	JAY-shon Prah-FIT
Nick RATTIN.....	ruh-TEEN
DAVEREN Rayner.....	Dave-UR-in
LIAM REMPEL.....	Lee-UM rem-PELL
TYRICE Richie.....	tie-REESE
Matthew SCHOOLEY.....	SKOOL-ee
DAYVEN SHINHOSTER.....	Dave-IN SHIN-HOE-stir
LIAM SORAGHAN.....	Lee-UM SORE-uh-HAN
DEMOND Taylor Jr.....	duh-MOND
Tristen TEWES.....	TAY-vis
RAISHEIN Thomas.....	RAY-shawn
MOHAMED TOURE.....	moe-HOMM-ed TORE-ray
Trey URWILER.....	er-WILE-er
Anthony VACULA.....	Vuh-SOO-luh
Nate VALCARCEL.....	Val-CAR-sul
Jacob WASKOW.....	Wass-KOW
KANON Woodill.....	Cannon
Logan ZSCHERNITZ.....	SHUR-nitz

Coaches

Eric EIDNESS.....	IDES-ness
Daryl AGPALSA.....	Ag-PAWL-suh
Jordan GIGLI.....	GEE-lee
Jason ONYEBUAGU.....	ON-yay-BOO-ah-GOO
Tony SORRENTINO.....	SORE-un-TEE-no

Hometowns

Oconomowoc.....	Uh-CON-oh-muh-WALK
Mukwonago.....	Muh-GWAHN-UH-go

2021 NIU PERSONNEL CHART

+EXPERIENCED PLAYERS RETURNING - 46

Offense (21): FB Brett Bostad, OL Evan Buss, OG John Champe, RB Erin Collins, OT Marques Cox, WR Billy Dozier, OL Leif Engstrand, QB Dustin Fletcher, OL J.J. Lippe, WR Fabian McCray, C Brayden Patton, OT Nolan Potter, WR Tyrice Richie, WR Trayvon Rudolph, TE Liam Soraghan, TE Tristen Tewes*, WR Mohamed Toure, WR Messiah Travis, WR Cole Tucker, RB Harrison Waylee, OG Logan Zschernitz

Defense (22): S C.J. Brown, LB Lance Deveaux Jr, LB Jaden Dolphin, S Joshua Earl, DT James Ester, CB Jordan Gandy, DT Jeffrey Griffin Jr, S Jordan Hansen, LB Eddie Jackson, DE Michael Kennedy, S Devin Lafayette, CB Zhamaine March, S Myles McGee, DT Devonte O'Malley, DE Pierce Oppong, S Jashon Prophete, LB Kyle Pugh#, LB Nick Rattin, LB Daveren Rayner, DT Demond Taylor Jr, CB Dillon Thomas, DE Ray Thomas

Specialists (3): LS Erik Abrell, P Matt Ference, K John Richardson

+EXPERIENCED PLAYERS LOST - 16

Offense (7): QB Ross Bowers, TE Daniel Crawford, QB Andrew Haidet, RB Jyran Mitchell, WR Dennis Robinson, OG Benn Olson, TE Maximilian Thrower

Defense (9): DT Miles Baggett, LB Jordan Cole, LB Rayshawn Gay, LB Nathan Harman, CB J.D. Harris, DE Cortez Hogans, LB Reggie Jennings, CB Jayden Lambert, DT Weston Kramer

*+Played in 3 or more career games; *Played linebacker last year.*

-- RETURNING STARTERS - 22

Offense (9): OG John Champe, OT Marques Cox, C Brayden Patton, OT Nolan Potter, WR Tyrice Richie, WR Trayvon Rudolph, WR Cole Tucker, RB Harrison Waylee, OG Logan Zschernitz

Defense (10): DT James Ester, CB Jordan Gandy, S Jordan Hansen, S Devin Lafayette, DE Pierce Oppong, LB Kyle Pugh#, LB Nick Rattin, LB Daveren Rayner, CB Dillon Thomas, DE Ray Thomas

Specialists (3): LS Erik Abrell, P Matt Ference, K John Richardson

-- STARTERS LOST - 5

Offense (4): QB Ross Bowers, TE Daniel Crawford, WR Dennis Robinson, OG Benn Olson

Defense (1): DT Weston Kramer

-- Minimum 3 games started in 2020; #Injured

TRANSFERS - 8

Transfers: RB Braxton Chapman (Jr., Youngstown State), TE Miles Joiner (Jr., Youngstown State), QB Rocky Lombardi (Jr., Michigan State), DL Jalen Pinkney (Jr., UCF), RB Clint Ratkovich (Sr., Western Illinois), LB Dayven Shinhoster (Fr., Nebraska-Kearney), S Nate Valcarcel (Fr., South Dakota), QB Ryan Yost (So., Wagner)

"COVID" SENIORS RETURNING - 6

Offense (3): TE Luke Mallette, OL Brayden Patton, WR Tyrice Richie

Defense (2): LB Lance Deveaux Jr, LB Kyle Pugh#

Specialist (1): P Matt Ference

"COVID" FRESHMEN RETURNING - 31

Offense (15): OL Evan Buss, TE Drew Cassens, OL John Champe, WR Billy Dozier, RB Jay Ducker, QB Dustin Fletcher, WR Jeremiah Howard, TE Jake Novotny, OL Tyler Pitcel, WR Trayvon Rudolph, OL Matthew Schooley, OL Seth Thompson, OL Anthony Vacula, RB Harrison Waylee, OL Jack Wilty

Defense (15): S C.J. Brown, DE Ivan Davis, LB Jaden Dolphin, S Jordan Hansen, DT Jack Hugunin, LB Eddie Jackson, S Devin Lafayette, CB Myles McGee, DT Devonte O'Malley, DE Pierce Oppong, S Jashon Prophete, LB Daveren Rayner, CB Eric Rogers, DE Ray Thomas, DT Jacob Waskow

Specialist (1): P Tom Foley

"THE HARD WAY"

"The Hard Way" has been a mantra for NIU Football long before hashtags or Twitter. The slogan has been embraced by Huskie players and coaches alike since 1996 when it was first introduced at NIU by a junior college transfer named Kenneth Williams during preseason camp. The Hard Way describes the hard work, sacrifice and determination required to get the job done no matter the obstacle. It describes a culture of toughness. The hashtag evolved from a song/chant that is sung in the Huskie locker room following victories.

NIU HUSKIES 2021 FOOTBALL

CAREER GAMES PLAYED/STARTED

Name, Pos.	Class	GP	GS
Erik Abrell, LS	Jr.-R	29	-
Brett Bostad, FB	So.-R	17	1
C.J. Brown, S	Fr.-C	6	2
Evan Buss, OL	Fr.-C	6	-
John Champe, OL	Fr.-C	6	3
Erin Collins, RB	Jr.	6	2
Marques Cox, OT	So.-R	18	16
Lance Deveaux Jr., LB	Sr.-R	34	16
Jaden Dolphin, S	Fr.-C	6	-
Billy Dozier, WR	Fr.-C	6	-
Joshua Earl, S	So.-R	12	1
Leif Engstrand, OT	Fr.-R	7	-
James Ester, DT	Fr.-R	10	3
Matt Ference, P	Sr.	45	-
Dustin Fletcher, QB	Fr.-C	3	-
Jordan Gandy, CB	So.	6	6
Jeffrey Griffin Jr., DT	So.-R	16	-
Jordan Hansen, S	Fr.-C	5	4
Eddie Jackson, LB	Fr.-C	5	2
Michael Kennedy, DE	Jr.-R	26	-
Devin Lafayette, S	Fr.-C	6	6
J.J. Lippe, OL	Fr.-R	3	-
Luke Mallette, DE	Sr.-R	1	-
Zhamaine March, CB	Jr.	26	-
Fabian McCray, WR	Fr.-R	4	-
Myles McGee, CB	Fr.-C	5	-
Devonte O'Malley, DL	Fr.-C	6	-
Pierce Opong, DE	Fr.-C	6	6
Brayden Patton, OL	Sr.-R	35	26
Nolan Potter, OT	So.-R	18	6
Jashon Prophete, CB	Fr.-C	3	-
Kyle Pugh, LB	Sr.-R	34	23
Nick Rattin, LB	So.	18	12
Daveren Rayner, LB	Fr.-C	6	5
John Richardson, K	So.-R	21	-
Tyrice Richie, WR	Sr.-R	17	12
Eric Rogers, CB	Fr.-C	2	-
Trayvon Rudolph, WR	Fr.-C	6	4
Liam Soraghan, TE	Jr.-R	19	1
Demond Taylor Jr., DT	Fr.-R	10	2
Tristen Tewes, LB/TE	Fr.-R	10	-
Dillon Thomas, DB	Jr.-R	32	9
Ray Thomas, DE	Fr.-C	6	6
Mohamed Toure, WR	Fr.-R	10	-
Messiah Travis, WR	Fr.-R	10	-
Cole Tucker, WR	Jr.-R	32	19
Harrison Waylee, TB	Fr.-C	6	4
Logan Zschernitz, OG	Fr.-R	10	8

NIU Head Coach Thomas Hammock



Thomas Hammock, a former Huskie student-athlete and assistant coach, returned home to Northern Illinois University as the 23rd head coach in the history of NIU football on Jan. 18, 2019. One of the top football student-athletes in school history, Hammock was named NIU head coach after five seasons (2014-18) as an assistant coach with the Baltimore Ravens.

He is the first African-American head coach in NIU football history and is the first alumnus to lead the Huskies as a Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) program.

In two seasons, Hammock has refreshed the roster while imposing academic standards that have led to the football team posting its highest GPA in school history (3.08), and completing the entire COVID-19 shortened six-game 2020 schedule without a single case of the virus.

Hammock began his coaching career at Wisconsin, where he spent two seasons as a graduate assistant, followed by two seasons as an assistant at NIU under Huskie Hall of Famer Joe Novak (2005-06). Hammock then served as an assistant at Minnesota and Wisconsin before joining the Ravens in 2014.

In five seasons as the running backs coach with the Ravens, Hammock helped Baltimore's rushing attack finish in the top 11 in the NFL three times, including in 2018 when the Ravens had the second-best rushing offense in the league, averaging 152.6 yards per game. The Ravens made the playoffs twice in Hammock's time in Baltimore.

Hammock helped mentor running back Justin Forsett to his first career Pro Bowl in 2014 as he rushed for a career-high 1,266 yards, fifth-most in the NFL. Baltimore fullback Kyle Juszczyk was selected to the Pro Bowl for the first time in 2016 after he led the NFL in catches (37) and receiving yards (266) by a fullback.

Prior to his five seasons in Baltimore, Hammock spent three years at the University of Wisconsin, where he was the running backs coach and assistant head coach. In Hammock's first season in Madison in 2011, the Badgers ranked 11th nationally in rushing, averaging 235.6 yards per game. Montee Ball led the nation in rushing yards (1,923) and broke Barry Sanders' single-season NCAA touchdown record with 39 scores, 33 rushing. Ball was a consensus first team All-American and a Heisman Trophy finalist for the Badgers, who finished 11-3 and played in the Rose Bowl.

The following season, Wisconsin once again ranked among the nation's elite rushing teams and Ball became the NCAA's all-time leader in rushing touchdowns and won the Doak Walker Award as the nation's top running back.

A two-time CoSIDA Academic All-American at running back during his playing days, Hammock returned to DeKalb as an assistant coach in 2005-06. In his first season, NIU Hall of Famer Garrett Wolfe rushed for 1,580 yards and 16 touchdowns in just nine games as NIU won the MAC West Division and appeared in the MAC Championship Game for the first time.

During the 2006 campaign, Wolfe rushed for an NCAA-best 1,928 yards as the Huskies reached the Poinsettia Bowl. Hammock helped Wolfe earn All-America and first team All-MAC honors in both 2005 and 2006. Wolfe was also the Vern Smith Leadership Award winner as the MAC's Most Valuable Player in 2006.

Following his two seasons with the Huskies, Hammock spent four years as the running backs coach at the University of Minnesota (2007-10), helping the Golden Gophers to the Insight Bowl in both 2008 and 2009. Hammock was named the co-offensive coordinator at Minnesota for the 2010 season and the Gophers moved up 26 spots nationally in rushing and 34 spots in total offense.

Hammock, a New Jersey native who grew up in Ft. Wayne, Ind., earned his bachelor's degree in marketing from NIU in December 2002, and a master's in educational leadership and policy analysis from Wisconsin in 2004. He and his wife, Cheynnitha, also a NIU alum, have a daughter, Tierra, and a son, Thomas Douglas.

ON THE WATCH

Four members of the 2021 NIU Football team have been named to one or more of the college football preseason watch lists, or have been nominated for a national college football award.

Clint Ratkovich, RB, Sr.-R..... Paul Hornung Award
 Reese's Senior Bowl
 Matt Ference, P, Sr..... Ray Guy Award
 Brayden Patton, C, Sr.-R..... Rimington Award
 Harrison Waylee, RB, Fr..... Doak Walker Award

2021 HUSKIE COACHING STAFF

Assoc. HC/Def. Coordinator/Safeties	Derrick Jackson.....	Coaches' Booth
Offensive Coordinator/Quarterbacks.....	Eric Eidsness.....	Coaches' Booth
Exec. Asst. Coach/Linebackers	Robert Wimberly	Field
Defensive Line/Recruiting Coord.....	Jordan Gigli	Field
Cornerbacks/Co-Spec. Teams Coord.	Dan Jackson.....	Field
Running Backs/Co-Spec. Teams Coord	Nic McKissic-Luke	Field
Offensive Line.....	Daryl Agpalsa	Field
Defensive Ends.....	Travis Moore	Field
Wide Receivers.....	Tony Sorrentino	Field
Tight Ends.....	Jason Onyebuagu	Field
Director of Sports Performance (FB).....	Juney Barnett.....	Field

NIU HUSKIES 2021 FOOTBALL

NIU PLAYERS TO WATCH

70 MARQUES COX

LT | 6-6 | 305 | So.-R | Peoria, Ill. | Peoria HS

• Started all six games at left tackle. Anchored a line that helped the NIU offense average 365.7 yards of total offense per game. Played a key role in helping tailback Harrison Waylee to back-to-back 110-yard rushing games to end the season. Provided protection on Ross Bowers' 300-yard passing game at Ball State (11-18), a season-best for NIU.

1 JAMES ESTER

DT | 6-3 | 289 | Fr.-R | Detroit, Mich. | Cass Tech

Year	G/GS	Solo	Asst.	Total	TFL	QS	PBU
2020	6/4	8	9	17	2.0	1	2
Career	10/4	10	9	19	4	1	2

• Played in all six games in 2020 with four starts. Finished ninth on the team with 17 tackles, including eight solo and two tackles for loss. Made at least one tackle in every game. PFF named him to its All-MAC second team. Recorded four tackles in back-to-back games against Central Michigan (11-11) and Ball State (11-18). Earned his first career sack against Eastern Michigan (12-12). Credited with three stops and broke up a pass at both Western Michigan (11-28) and at EMU.

36 MATT FERENCE

P | 5-11 | 190 | Sr. | St. Louis, Mo. | Lafayette HS

Year	G/GS	Punts	Yds.	Avg.	In20	Lg
2020	6/-	25	1,021	40.8	5	53
Career	45/-	259	10,707	41.3	84	70

• Four-year starter at punter holds nearly every Huskie punting mark, including career average (41.5), most punts in a season (86) and a career (265) and most punting yards in a season (3,473) and career (10,994). Owns the top three single season punting averages at NIU. All-time, nearly a third of his punts (86-of-265, 32%) have pinned opponents inside their 20. • Earned third team All-MAC honors from PFF and was on Phil Steele's fourth team in 2020. In addition to punting, served as the holder for all placekicks. Averaged 42.2 yards per punt last season to up his career average to 41.5. Had four punts of over 50 yards in 2020.

14 JORDAN GANDY

CB | 5-10 | 175 | So. | DeKalb, Ill. | DeKalb

Year	G/GS	Solo	Asst.	Total	TFL	INT	PBU
2020	5/5	21	15	36	-	1	7

• Second team All-MAC selection in 2020. Led the NIU defense in tackles (41) and passes defended (8) last season. Tied for the MAC lead in pass breakups with seven. Snagged his first NIU interception against Central Michigan (11-11). Recorded five pass breakups against Western Michigan (11-28). Tallied a career-high 11 total tackles twice; at Ball State (11-18) and vs. Toledo (12-5).

3 DEVIN LAFAYETTE

S | 6-2 | 191 | Fr. | Brunswick, Ga. | Brunswick

Year	G/GS	Solo	Asst.	Total	TFL	QS	INT	PBU
2020	6/6	21	15	36	1.0	1	1	1

• Third team All-MAC selection in 2020. Started all six games as a true freshman. Finished second on the team in tackles with 36, including 21 solo stops. Made at least two tackles in every game. Made a career high 13 tackles, eight solo, against Toledo (12-5). Snagged his first career interception versus the Rockets. Tallied 10 total tackles and his first career sack at Ball State (11-18).

12 ROCKY LOMBARDI

QB | 6-3 | 227 | Jr.-R | Clive, Iowa | Valley HS/Michigan State

Year	G/GS	Rush	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Lg	Comp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds	TD	Lg
2020 (MSU)	6-6	32	39	1.2	0	21	84-157-9	53.5	1,090	8	75
Career	22/22	74	166	3.0	0	47	159-332-14	47.9	1,902	11	75

• Three-year letterwinner played in 22 career games with the Spartans, including nine starts in three seasons. From 2018-20 at MSU, completed 159-of-332 passes for 1,902 yards with 11 TDs and 14 interceptions, while tallying 74 rushing attempts for 166 yards (2.2 ypc). Threw for a career-high 1,090 yards on 84-of-157 passing (.535) with eight TDs and nine interceptions in six games played in 2020. Rushed for a career-high 65 yards on 10 carries in 29-20 win over Northwestern (11-28-20). Finished 17-of-32 for a career-high 323 yards, with three TDs in a 27-24 win at No. 13 Michigan (10-31-20). Won Manning Award National Quarterback of the Week honors, and was named to the Davey O'Brien National Quarterback Award's Great 8 list (11-2-20) for his performance versus Michigan.

NIU HUSKIES 2021 FOOTBALL

NIU PLAYERS TO WATCH

58 BRAYDEN PATTON

C | 6-5 | 304 | Sr-R | Ellettsville, Ind. | Edgewood HS

• Collected third team All-MAC honors as NIU's top offensive lineman and named to PFF's second team in 2020. Started all six games at center. One of six Huskie offensive players to start every game and has started 18 consecutive games. Led an offensive line that powered the offense to an average of 365.7 total offense yards per game. Aided NIU to season-bests in rushing yards (199) and total offense (420) in the season finale at Eastern Michigan (12-12). Helped clear the way for tailback Harrison Waylee to back-to-back 100-yard rushing games to end the season. Academic All-MAC selection last season.

25 CLINT RATKOVICH

RB | 6-1 | 228 | Sr-R | Crete, Ill. | Crete-Monee HS/Western Illinois

• Grad transfer from Western Illinois, arrived at NIU for the Spring 2021 semester. Two-time first team all-Missouri Valley Football Conference selection in 2018 and 2019. Served as team captain in 2018 and 2019. Named to the 2017 MVFC All-Newcomer Team. Amassed 1,204 yards and 10 touchdowns receiving on 128 receptions in 35 games played. Rushed for 429 yards and three scores on 97 carries from 2017-19. Ranked third in the MVFC in catches per game (4.8) and was second on the team with 444 receiving yards while rushing for 258 in 2019. • Led WIU with 54 catches and averaged 11.4 yards per catch in 2018. 18). Earned MVFC All-Academic honors in 2018 and 2019.

Year	G/GS	Att.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Lg	Rcv.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Lg
2020											
Did Not Play											
Career	35/-	97	429	4.4	3	22	128	1,204	9.4	10	52

3 TYRICE RICHIE

WR | 6-0 | 193 | Jr. | Chicago, Ill. | Homewood-Flossmoor HS

• First team All-MAC honoree in 2020. Established career highs in receptions (53) and yards (597) and tied his career best in touchdowns (4). Paced the MAC in catches per game with 8.8. Fifth in the MAC in yards receiving per game at 99.5. Had four games with 100 or more yards receiving. Recorded at least seven catches in every game. Set single-game career highs in catches (12) and yards (131) against Western Michigan (11-28). Caught 11 passes for 108 yards against Ball State (11-18). Opened the season with nine catches and 106 yards receiving against Buffalo (11-4). Tallied 111 yards, including a season-long 43-yard reception, and a touchdown on seven receptions against Toledo (12-5). Hauled in a 19-yard touchdown grab at Eastern Michigan (12-12). Caught a 39-yard pass at Western Michigan (11-28).

Year	G/GS	Rcv.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Lg
2020	6/6	53	597	11.4	4	43
Career	17/12	85	1,012	11.9	8	71

85 TRAYVON RUDOLPH

WR | 5-10 | 179 | Fr. | Crete, Ill. | Crete-Monee HS

• Earned first team Freshman All-American honors as a kick returner from the Football Writer's (FWAA) and *The Athletic* in 2020. Second team All-MAC selection at kick returner. Second on the team and 22nd in the MAC in receiving yards with 232 on 14 receptions, which ranked third at NIU and 20th in the league. Led the conference and ranked second in the country in combined kick return yards with 725. Tied for fifth in NIU's record book with 30 kickoff returns and sixth in kickoff return yardage (717). Sixth in the league and 30th in the nation in kick returns a game (23.9). Team leader in all-purpose yards per game (159.50) good for fifth in the MAC and 10th in the nation. Tallied 151 yards on five kickoff returns in the season opener against Buffalo (11-4), surpassing NIU's kickoff return yardage from 2019. Established career high for receiving yards (95) and receptions (5) at Ball State (11-18). Ran back a career-high seven kickoff returns for 140 yards at Eastern Michigan (12-12).

Year	G/GS	Rcv.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Lg	No.	Yds	Avg	TD	Lg
2020	6/4	14	232	16.6	0	47	30	717	23.9	0	56

4 RAY THOMAS

DE | 6-4 | 257 | Fr.-C | Racine, Wis. | Washington Park HS

• One of seven Huskie defensive players to start all six games in 2020. Finished seventh on the team with 20 tackles, tops among all defensive linemen. Registered at least one tackle in every game. Made a career-best six tackles and broke up a pass against Central Michigan (11-11). Recorded four stops at Ball State, and was in on a tackle for loss, and at Eastern Michigan. Also credited with a half tackle for loss at Western Michigan among his three stops in that game.

Year	G/GS	Solo	Asst.	Total	TFL	QS	PBU
2020	6/6	8	12	20	1	-	1

30 HARRISON WAYLEE

TB | 5-10 | 180 | Fr. | Johnston, Iowa | Urbandale HS

• Saw action in all six games and started the last four. Led the Huskies in rushing with 456 yards on 107 carries. Added 61 yards receiving on eight catches with a touchdown. Tallied two 100-yard rushing games, including a career-high 122 yards on 23 carries at Eastern Michigan (12-12). Recorded his first career 100-yard rushing performance and scored his first career rushing touchdown against Toledo (12-5). Added three catches for 24 yards versus Toledo. Totaled 60 or more rushing yards in three additional games - versus Buffalo (11-4), Ball State (11-18) and Western Michigan (11-28). Accounted for a season-high 27 yards receiving on three receptions, including a receiving TD at Western Michigan (11-28).

Year	G/GS	Att.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Lg	Rcv.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Lg
2020	6/4	107	456	4.3	1	28	8	61	7.6	1	16

NIU HUSKIES 2021 FOOTBALL

NIU 2021 ROSTERS

No.	Name	Pos.	Hgt.	Wgt.	Elig.	Hometown (High School/Previous School)	No.	Name	Pos.
0	Akanimo Asuquo	LB	6-0	215	Fr.	Forney, Texas (North Forney)	93	Erik Abrell	LS
1	James Ester	DT	6-3	286	Fr.-R	Detroit, Mich. (Cass Tech)	90	Tony Agyapong	DE
2	Ethan Hampton	QB	6-3	194	Fr.	Elburn, Ill. (Aurora Christian)	0	Akanimo Asuquo	LB
2	Lance Deveaux Jr.	LB	5-11	218	Sr.-R	Pompano Beach, Fla. (St. Thomas Aquinas)	24	Mason Blakemore	RB
3	Devin Lafayette	S	6-2	194	Fr.-C	Brunswick, Ga. (Brunswick)	5	Julius Bolden	RB
3	Tyrice Richie	WR	6-0	194	Sr.-R	Chicago, Ill. (Homewood-Flossmoor/ Dodge City [KS] CC)	32	Brett Bostad	FB
4	Dustin Fletcher	QB	6-3	219	Fr.-C	Flint, Mich. (Carmen-Ainsworth)	19	Isaiah Bragg	WR
4	Ray Thomas	DE	6-4	281	Fr.-C	Racine, Wis. (Washington Park)	26	Antario Brown	RB
5	Julius Bolden	RB	5-8	182	Fr.	Wichita, Kansas (Wichita Northwest)	6	C.J. Brown	S
5	Michael Kennedy	DE	6-1	229	Jr.-R	Chicago, Ill. (Mt. Carmel)	20	Tyler Brueckner	WR
6	C.J. Brown	S	5-11	192	Fr.-C	Canton, Mich. (Walled Lake Western)	60	Evan Buss	OL
6	Jeffery Lomax	QB	6-3	203	Fr.	Elgin, Ill. (Elgin)	29	JaVaughn Byrd	CB
7	Fabian McCray	WR	6-2	186	Fr.-R	Chicago, Ill. (Phillips)	72	Brendan Carr	OL
7	Jordan Hansen	S	6-1	188	Fr.-C	Arlington Heights, Ill. (John Hersey)	47	Drew Cassens	TE
8	Jeffrey Griffin Jr.	DT	6-0	299	So.-R	Homewood, Ill. (Homewood-Flossmoor)	76	John Champe	OL
8	Jevyon "Jay" Ducker	RB	5-10	185	Fr.-C	Bellevue, Neb. (Bellevue West)	23	Braxton Chapman	RB
9	Daveren Rayner	LB	6-3	200	Fr.-C	Indianapolis, Ind. (Lawrence Central)	21	Erin Collins	RB
9	Mohamed Toure	WR	6-2	200	Fr.-R	Irvington, N.J. (Irvington)	70	Marques Cox	OL
10	Billy Dozier	WR	5-10	190	Fr.-C	New Lenox, Ill. (Lincoln Way West)	17	Alex Crawford	WR
10	Demond Taylor Jr.	DT	6-2	296	Fr.-R	East St. Louis, Ill. (East St. Louis)	52	Ivan Davis	DE
11	Dillon Thomas	DB	6-2	190	Jr.-R	Kansas City, Mo. (Park Hill South)	2	Lance Deveaux Jr.	LB
11	Kyle Pugh	LB	6-0	226	Sr.-6	Chicago Heights, Ill. (Bloom Township)	26	Jaden Dolphin	LB
11	Messiah Travis	WR	5-10	180	Fr.-R	Chicago, Ill. (Solorio Academy)	10	Billy Dozier	WR
12	Eric Rogers	CB	6-2	180	Fr.-C	Burlington, N.J. (Burlington Township)	8	Jay Ducker	RB
12	Rocky Lombardi	QB	6-3	219	Jr.-R	Clive, Iowa (Valley/Michigan State)	33	Joshua Earl	S
13	Myles McGee	CB	6-0	191	Fr.-C	Canton, Ga. (Sequoyah)	75	Leif Engstrand	OL
14	Jeremiah Howard	WR	5-11	178	Fr.-C	Merrillville, Ind. (Merrillville)	1	James Ester	DT
14	Jordan Gandy	CB	5-10	180	So.	DeKalb, Ill. (DeKalb/South Dakota State)	36	Matt Ference	P
15	Cole Tucker	WR	6-2	206	Jr.-R	DeKalb, Ill. (DeKalb)	4	Dustin Fletcher	QB
15	Ty Myles	CB	5-10	187	Fr.	Blackshear, Ga. (Pierce County)	98	Tom Foley	P
16	Anthony Hernandez	LB	6-2	204	Fr.	Schaumburg, Ill. (Schaumburg)	17	Louis Frye	S
16	Ryan Yost	QB	6-4	192	So.	Medford, N.J. (Holy Spirit/Wagner)	14	Jordan Gandy	CB
17	Alex Crawford	WR	5-11	173	Fr.	Macomb, Mich. (Dakota)	68	Marko Gbedo	OL
17	Louis Frye	S	6-0	190	Fr.	Teaneck, N.J. (Paramus Catholic)	8	Jeffrey Griffin Jr.	DT
18	Elijah Hamm	LB	6-1	196	Fr.	Watkinsville, Ga. (Oconee County)	84	George Gumbs	TE
19	Isaiah Bragg	WR	5-9	176	Fr.	Chicago, Ill. (Saint Rita of Cascia)	59	Cade Haberman	DT
19	Nate Valcarcel	S	6-1	180	Fr.-C	Greenfield, Wis. (Whitnall/South Dakota)	18	Elijah Hamm	LB
20	Tyler Brueckner	WR	6-0	190	Fr.	DeKalb, Ill. (Aurora Christian)	2	Ethan Hampton	QB
20	Zhamaine March	CB	5-8	175	Jr.	Detroit, Mich. (East English Village Prep)	7	Jordan Hansen	S
21	Emmanuel Harris	CB	5-8	160	Fr.	Bourbonnais, Ill. (Bishop McNamara)	21	Emmanuel Harris	CB
21	Erin Collins	RB	6-2	212	Jr.	Plant City, Fla. (Armwood/Hutchinson [KS] CC)	27	Malik Harvey	CB
22	Cyrus McGarrell	CB	6-2	178	Fr.	Windsor, Ontario, Can. (Clearwater Acad. International. [Fla.])	91	Isaac Hatfield	LS
23	Braxton Chapman	RB	6-2	220	Jr.	Farrell, Pa. (Farrell/Youngstown State)	16	Anthony Hernandez	LB
23	Eddie Jackson	LB	6-0	222	Fr.-C	Miami, Fla. (Gulliver Prep)	71	Drew Hoth	OT
24	Jashon Prophete	S	5-11	182	Fr.-C	Pompano Beach, Fla. (Blanche Ely)	14	Jeremiah Howard	WR
24	Mason Blakemore	RB	6-1	198	Fr.	O'Fallon, Mo. (Centralia [Ill.])	42	Jack Hugunin	DT
25	Clint Ratkovich	RB	6-1	220	Sr.-R	Crete, Ill. (Crete-Monee/Western Illinois)	23	Eddie Jackson	LB
26	Antario Brown	RB	5-10	214	Fr.	Savannah, Ga. (Beach)	28	Muhammad Jammeh	S
26	Jaden Dolphin	LB	6-2	210	Fr.-C	Des Plaines, Ill. (Maine West)	80	Miles Joiner	TE
27	Malik Harvey	CB	5-11	180	Fr.	Camden, N.J. (Woodrow Wilson)	57	Trevon Jordan	DE
28	Muhammad Jammeh	S	6-1	188	Fr.	Detroit, Mich. (Renaissance)	5	Michael Kennedy	DE
29	JaVaughn Byrd	CB	6-0	180	Fr.	Milwaukee, Wis. (Rufus King)	44	Ryan King	LB
30	Harrison Waylee	RB	5-10	185	Fr.-C	Johnston, Iowa (Urbandale)	87	Blake Kosin	TE
31	Trevor Laffin	S	6-0	196	Fr.-R	Carpentersville, Ill. (Hampshire)	3	Devin Lafayette	S
32	Brett Bostad	FB	6-0	240	So.-R	Kennedale, Texas (Kennedale)	31	Trevor Laffin	S
32	David Watson Jr.	CB	5-9	169	Fr.	Philadelphia, Pa. (St. Joseph's Prep)	49	Brock Lampe	LB
33	Joshua Earl	S	6-1	194	So.-R	Naperville, Ill. (Neuqua Valley)	79	J.J. Lippe	OL
							6	Jeffery Lomax	QB
							12	Rocky Lombardi	QB
							73	Brandon MacKinnon	OL
							89	Luke Mallette	DE
							43	Ryan Mann	LB
							20	Zhamaine March	CB
							7	Fabian McCray	WR

NIU HUSKIES 2021 FOOTBALL

NIU 2021 ROSTERS

No.	Name	Pos.	Hgt.	Wgt.	Elig.	Hometown (High School/Previous School)	No.	Name	Pos.
35	Brian Whitsey	LB	6-0	215	Fr.	Chicago, Ill. (Solorio Academy)	22	Cyrus McGarrell	CB
36	Matt Ference	P	5-11	190	Sr.	St. Louis, Mo. (Lafayette)	13	Myles McGee	CB
38	Nick Rattin	LB	6-2	223	So.	Palatine, Ill. (Fremd)	15	Ty Myles	CB
39	John Richardson	K	5-11	170	So.-R	Orland Park, Ill. (Brother Rice)	45	Makhi Nelson-Douglas	LB
40	Izuchukwu Ozoh	TE	6-4	215	Fr.	Hazel Crest, Ill. (Homewood-Flossmoor)	81	Jake Novotny	TE
42	Jack Hugunin	DT	6-2	297	Fr.-C	Oswego, Ill. (Oswego)	50	Pete Nygra	OL
43	Ryan Mann	LB	6-0	199	Fr.	Vernon Hills, Ill. (Vernon Hills)	95	Devonte O'Malley	DT
44	Ryan King	LB	6-0	204	Fr.	Wildwood, Mo. (Chaminade College Prep)	53	James Ongtengco	DT
45	Makhi Nelson-Douglas	LB	6-1	210	Fr.	Omaha, Neb. (Elkhorn South)	99	Pierce Oppong	DE
46	Dayven Shinhoster	LB	6-0	215	Fr.	Barrington, Ill. (Barrington)	40	Izuchukwu Ozoh	TE
47	Drew Cassens	TE	6-2	240	Fr.-C	Downers Grove, Ill. (Downers Grove North)	58	Brayden Patton	OL
49	Brock Lampe	LB	6-1	232	Fr.	Kenosha, Wis. (Bradford)	88	Mason Pierre-Antoine	WR
50	Pete Nygra	OL	6-4	289	Fr.	North Indianapolis, Ind. (Brownsburg)	54	Jalen Pinkney	DL
52	Ivan Davis	DE	6-3	235	Fr.-C	Canton, Mich. (Plymouth)	77	Luke Pinnick	OL
53	James Ongtengco	DT	6-1	277	Fr.	Belvidere, Ill. (Boylan Catholic)	74	Tyler Pitcel	OL
54	Jalen Pinkney	DL	6-3	231	Jr.	Norcross, Ga. (Norcross/UCF)	69	Nolan Potter	OL
55	Jaden Wilson	DE	6-2	234	Fr.	Detroit, Mich. (Renaissance)	24	Jashon Prophete	S
56	Liam Rempel	DE	6-4	235	Fr.	Monmouth Beach, N.J. (The Hun School)	11	Kyle Pugh	LB
57	Trevon Jordan	DE	6-4	233	Fr.	Sterling, Ill. (Sterling)	25	Clint Ratkovich	RB
58	Brayden Patton	OL	6-5	309	Sr.-R	Ellettsville, Ind. (Edgewood)	38	Nick Rattin	LB
59	Cade Haberman	DT	6-2	297	Fr.	Omaha, Neb. (Westside)	9	Daveren Rayner	LB
60	Evan Buss	OL	6-6	315	Fr.-C	Kimberly, Wis. (Kimberly)	56	Liam Rempel	DE
62	Seth Thompson	OL	6-4	288	Fr.-C	Eden Prairie, Minn. (Holy Family Catholic)	39	John Richardson	K
64	Matthew Schooley	OL	6-2	303	Fr.-C	Wisconsin Rapids, Wis. (Lincoln)	3	Tyrice Richie	WR
65	Logan Zschernitz	OL	6-3	311	Fr.-R	Spencer, Wis. (Spencer)	12	Eric Rogers	CB
66	Anthony Vacula	OL	6-4	325	Fr.-C	Hales Corners, Wis. (Whitnall)	85	Trayvon Rudolph	WR
68	Marko Gbedo	OL	6-3	330	Fr.	Alsip, Ill. (Shepard)	64	Matthew Schooley	OL
69	Nolan Potter	OL	6-6	308	So.-R	Cedar Rapids, Iowa (Washington)	46	Dayven Shinhoster	LB
70	Marques Cox	OL	6-6	306	So.-R	Peoria, Ill. (Peoria)	83	Liam Soraghan	TE
71	Drew Hoth	OT	6-4	310	Fr.	Cedar Falls, Iowa (Cedar Falls)	10	Demond Taylor Jr.	DT
72	Brendan Carr	OL	6-7	293	Fr.	Hanna, Ind. (South Central)	82	Tristen Tewes	TE
73	Brandon MacKinnon	OL	6-5	282	Fr.	Lakeville, Mass. (The Hun School [N.J.]	11	Dillon Thomas	DB
74	Tyler Pitcel	OL	6-4	306	Fr.-C	Mukwonago, Wis. (Mukwonago)	4	Ray Thomas	DE
75	Leif Engstrand	OL	6-8	331	Fr.-R	Oconomowoc, Wis. (Oconomowoc)	62	Seth Thompson	OL
76	John Champe	OL	6-4	321	Fr.-C	Brookfield, Wis. (Brookfield East)	9	Mohamed Toure	WR
77	Luke Pinnick	OL	6-4	291	Fr.	State Center, Iowa (West Marshall)	11	Messiah Travis	WR
78	Jack Wilty	OL	6-4	309	Fr.-C	Altoona, Iowa (Southeast Polk)	15	Cole Tucker	WR
79	J.J. Lippe	OL	6-5	311	Fr.-R	Milwaukee, Wis. (Whitefish Bay)	86	Trey Urwiler	WR
80	Miles Joiner	TE	6-4	259	Jr.-R	Dayton, Ohio (Butler/Youngstown State)	66	Anthony Vacula	OL
81	Jake Novotny	TE	6-4	226	Fr.-C	Greendale, Wis. (Marquette University)	19	Nate Valcarcel	S
82	Tristen Tewes	TE	6-3	246	Fr.-R	Pleasant Plains, Ill. (Pleasant Plains)	96	Jacob Waskow	DT
83	Liam Soraghan	TE	6-7	261	Jr.-R	Dearborn, Mich. (Divine Child)	32	David Watson Jr.	CB
84	George Gumbs	TE	6-4	210	Fr.	Chicago, Ill. (Simeon)	30	Harrison Waylee	RB
85	Trayvon Rudolph	WR	5-10	182	Fr.-C	Crete, Ill. (Crete-Monee)	35	Brian Whitsey	LB
86	Trey Urwiler	WR	5-9	180	Fr.	Mooseheart, Ill. (Batavia)	94	Jalonnie Williams	DT
87	Blake Kosin	TE	6-5	225	Fr.	Davisburg, Mich. (Clarkston)	55	Jaden Wilson	DE
88	Mason Pierre-Antoine	WR	6-0	172	Fr.	Frankfort, Ill. (Lincoln Way East)	78	Jack Wilty	OL
89	Luke Mallette	DE	6-4	241	Sr.-R	Chicago, Ill. (Whitney Young/Amherst College)	92	Kanon Woodill	K
90	Tony Agyapong	DE	6-5	216	Fr.	Chicago, Ill. (Lincoln Park)	16	Ryan Yost	QB
91	Isaac Hatfield	LS	6-2	232	Fr.	Georgetown, Ind. (Floyd Central)	65	Logan Zschernitz	OL
92	Kanon Woodill	K	5-11	165	Fr.	Plainfield, Ill. (Plainfield North)			
93	Erik Abrell	LS	6-1	215	Jr.-R	Aurora, Ill. (Aurora Christian/Western Illinois)			
94	Jalonnie Williams	DT	6-4	290	Fr.	Milwaukee, Wis. (Greenfield)			
95	Devonte O'Malley	DT	6-2	273	Fr.-C	Midlothian, Ill. (Bremen)			
96	Jacob Waskow	DT	6-2	276	Fr.-C	Canton, Ill. (Canton)			
98	Tom Foley	P	6-4	218	Fr.-C	Peoria, Ill. (Peoria Notre Dame/Minnesota)			
99	Pierce Oppong	DE	6-3	261	Fr.-C	Bloomington, Minn. (Jefferson)			

KEY: Fr.-C - was a true freshman in 2020. Due to COVID-19, players on 2021 roster retained same eligibility (class) for 2021.



vs. Georgia Tech (Sept. 4, 2021)

In lieu of a depth chart, NIU is providing this numerical list of players at each position with a chance to play in the 2021 season opener at Georgia Tech on September 4.

OFFENSE

Quarterbacks

- 2 Ethan Hampton (6-3, 194, Fr., Elburn, Ill., Aurora Christian HS)
- 4 Dustin Fletcher (6-3, 219, Fr.-C, Flint, Mich., Carmen-Ainsworth HS)
- 12 Rocky Lombardi (6-3, 219, Jr.-R, Clive, Iowa, Valley HS/Michigan State)
- 16 Ryan Yost (6-4, 192, So., Medford, N.J., Holy Spirit/Wagner)

Running Backs

- 8 Jay Ducker (5-10, 185, Fr.-C, Bellevue, Neb., Bellevue West HS)
- 21 Erin Collins (6-2, 212, Jr., Plant City, Fla., Armwood/Hutchinson [KS] CC)
- 23 Braxton Chapman (6-2, 220, Jr., Farrell, Pa., Farrell/Youngstown State)
- 24 Mason Blakemore (6-1, 198, Fr., O'Fallon, Mo., Centralia, [Ill.] HS)
- 25 Clint Ratkovich (6-1, 220, Sr.-R, Crete, Ill., Crete-Monee HS/Western Illinois)
- 26 Antario Brown (5-10, 214, Fr., Savannah, Ga., Beach HS)
- 30 Harrison Waylee (5-10, 185, Fr.-C, Johnston, Iowa, Urbandale HS)

Tight Ends

- 32 Brett Bostad (6-0, 240, So.-R, Kennedale, Texas, Kennedale HS)
- 47 Drew Cassens (6-2, 240, Fr.-C, Downers Grove, Ill., Downers Grove North HS)
- 80 Miles Joiner (6-4, 259, Jr.-R, Dayton, Ohio, Butler HS/Youngstown State)
- 82 Tristen Tewes (6-3, 246, Fr.-R, Pleasant Plains, Ill., Pleasant Plains HS)
- 83 Liam Soraghan (6-7, 261, Jr.-R, Dearborn, Mich., Divine Child HS)

Wide Receivers

- 3 Tyrice Richie (6-0, 194, Sr.-R, Chicago, Ill., Homewood-Flossmoor/Dodge City CC)
- 7 Fabian McCray (6-2, 186, Fr.-R, Chicago, Ill., Phillips HS)
- 9 Mohamed Toure (6-2, 200, Fr.-R, Irvington, N.J., Irvington HS)
- 10 Billy Dozier (5-10, 190, Fr.-C, New Lenox, Ill., Lincoln Way West HS)
- 11 Messiah Travis (5-10, 182, Fr.-R, Chicago, Ill., Solorio Academy)
- 14 Jeremiah Howard (5-11, 178, Fr.-C, Merrillville, Ind., Merrillville HS)
- 15 Cole Tucker (6-2, 206, Jr.-R, DeKalb, Ill., DeKalb HS)
- 85 Trayvon Rudolph (5-10, 182, Fr.-C, Crete, Ill., Crete-Monee HS)

Offensive Line

- 50 Pete Nygra (6-4, 289, Fr., North Indianapolis, Ind., Brownsburg HS)
- 58 Brayden Patton (6-5, 309, Sr.-R, Ellettsville, Ind., Edgewood HS)
- 60 Evan Buss (6-6, 315, Fr.-C, Kimberly, Wis., Kimberly HS)
- 64 Matthew Schooley (6-2, 303, Fr.-C, Wisconsin Rapids, Wis., Lincoln HS)
- 65 Logan Zschernitz (6-3, 311, Fr.-R, Spencer, Wis., Spencer HS)
- 69 Nolan Potter (6-6, 308, So.-R, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Washington HS)
- 70 Marques Cox (6-6, 306, So.-R, Peoria, Ill., Peoria HS)
- 74 Tyler Pitcel (6-4, 306, Fr.-C, Mukwonago, Wis., Mukwonago HS)
- 75 Leif Engstrand (6-8, 331, Fr.-R, Oconomowoc, Wis., Oconomowoc HS)
- 76 John Champe (6-4, 321, Fr.-C, Brookfield, Wis., Brookfield East HS)
- 79 J.J. Lippe (6-5, 311, Fr.-R, Milwaukee, Wis., Whitefish Bay HS)

SPECIALISTS

- P 36 Matt Ference (5-11, 186, Sr., St. Louis, Mo., Lafayette HS)
- K 39 John Richardson (5-11, 180, So.-R, Orland Park, Ill., Brother Rice HS)
- LS 93 Erik Abrell (6-1, 215, Jr.-R, Aurora, Ill., Aurora Christian/Western Illinois)

DEFENSE

Defensive End

- 4 Ray Thomas (6-4, 281, Fr.-C, Racine, Wis., Washington Park HS)
- 5 Michael Kennedy (6-1, 229, Jr.-R, Chicago, Ill., Mt. Carmel HS)
- 52 Ivan Davis (6-3, 235, Fr.-C, Canton, Mich., Plymouth HS)
- 54 Jalen Pinkney (6-3, 231, Jr., Norcross, Ga., Norcross HS/UCF)
- 55 Jaden Wilson (6-2, 234, Fr., Detroit, Mich., Renaissance HS)
- 99 Pierce Oppong (6-3, 261, Fr.-C, Bloomington, Minn., Jefferson HS)

Defensive Tackle

- 1 James Ester (6-3, 286, Fr.-R, Detroit, Mich., Cass Tech)
- 8 Jeffrey Griffin Jr. (6-0, 299, So.-R, Homewood, Ill., Homewood-Flossmoor HS)
- 10 Demond Taylor Jr. (6-2, 296, Fr.-R, East St. Louis, Ill., East St. Louis HS)
- 42 Jack Hugunin (6-2, 297, Fr.-C, Oswego, Ill., Oswego HS)
- 59 Cade Haberman (6-2, 297, Fr., Omaha, Neb., Westside HS)
- 95 Devonte O'Malley (6-2, 273, Fr.-C, Midlothian, Ill., Bremen HS)
- 96 Jacob Waskow (6-2, 276, Fr.-C, Canton, Ill., Canton HS)

Linebackers

- 2 Lance Deveaux Jr. (5-11, 218, Sr.-R, Pompano Beach, Fla., St. Thomas Aquinas)
- 9 Daveren Rayner (6-3, 200, Fr.-C, Indianapolis, Ind., Lawrence Centra HSI)
- 18 Elijah Hamm (LB, 6-1, 196, Fr., Watkinsville, Ga., Oconee County HS)
- 23 Eddie Jackson (6-0, 222, Fr.-C, Miami, Fla., Gulliver Prep)
- 26 Jaden Dolphin (6-2, 210, Fr.-C, Des Plaines, Ill., Maine West HS)
- 38 Nick Rattin (6-2, 223, So., Palatine, Ill., Fremd HS)
- 45 Makhi Nelson-Douglas (6-1, 210, Fr., Omaha, Neb., Elkhorn South HS)
- 46 Dayven Shinhoster (6-0, 215, Fr., Barrington, Ill., Barrington HS)
- 49 Brock Lampe (6-1, 232, Fr., Kenosha, Wis., Bradford HS)

Cornerbacks

- 12 Eric Rogers (6-2, 178, Fr.-C, Burlington, N.J., Burlington Township HS)
- 13 Myles McGee (6-0, 191, Fr.-C, Canton, Ga., Sequoyah HS)
- 14 Jordan Gandy (5-10, 180, So., DeKalb, Ill., DeKalb HS, South Dakota State)
- 15 Ty Myles (5-10, 187, Fr., Blackshear, Ga., Pierce County HS)
- 22 Cyrus McGarrell (6-2, 178, Fr., Windsor, Ontario, Clearwater Acad. Int'l. [Fla.]
- 20 Zhamaine March (5-8, 175, Jr., Detroit, Mich., East English Village Prep)
- 29 JaVaughn Byrd (6-0, 180, Fr., Milwaukee, Wis., Rufus King HS)

Safeties

- 3 Devin Lafayette (6-2, 194, Fr.-C, Brunswick, Ga., Brunswick HS)
- 6 C.J. Brown (5-11, 192, Fr.-C, Canton, Mich., Walled Lake Western HS)
- 7 Jordan Hansen (6-1, 188, Fr.-C, Arlington Heights, Ill., John Hersey HS)
- 11 Dillon Thomas (6-2, 190, Jr.-R, Kansas City, Mo., Park Hill South HSI)
- 19 Nate Valcarcel (6-1, 180, Fr.-C, Greenfield, Wis., Whitnall HS/South Dakota)
- 24 Jashon Prophete (5-11, 182, Fr.-C, Pompano Beach, Fla., Blanche Ely HS)
- 28 Muhammad Jammeh (6-1, 188, Fr., Detroit, Mich., Renaissance HS)
- 33 Josh Earl (6-1, 194, So.-R, Naperville, Ill., Neuqua Valley HS)