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2020 WKU FOOTBALL ALPHABETICAL ROSTER — as of August 18

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Weight	Cl.-Exp.	Hometown (HS/Previous School)
27	Ouari Alexander	DB	5-10	180	r-Sr.-1L	Louisville, Ky. (duPont Manual HS/Eastern Kentucky)
18	Talique Allen	DB	6-1	200	Fr.-HS	Fort Valley, Ga. (Peach County HS)
43	Drake Alsup	WR	6-0	180	Fr.-HS	Cross Plains, Tenn. (East Robertson HS)
14	Stephone Atkinson	DE	6-3	225	r-Fr.-RS	Lake Minneola, Fla. (Lake Minneola HS)
36	Kyle Bailey	LB	6-0	225	Sr.-3L	Carrollton, Ga. (Bremen HS)
54	Matt Baldeck	LS	6-0	220	r-Jr.-TR	Lewiston, Idaho (Lewiston HS/Michigan)
50	Ricky Barber	DT	6-3	295	r-Fr.-RS	Louisville, Ky. (Doss HS)
89	Joey Beljan	TE	6-3	240	r-So.-1L	Frenchtown, N.J. (Delaware Valley HS)
29	Beanie Bishop	DB	5-10	170	r-So.-1L	Louisville, Ky. (Pleasure Ridge Park HS)
4	John Blunt, Jr.	DB	6-1	185	r-So.-TR	Arlington, Texas (Mansfield Timberview HS/Cisco College)
59	Jake Bowman	LS	6-0	220	Fr.-HS	Nashville, Tenn. (Lipscomb Academy)
9	Dominique Bradshaw	DB	6-0	180	r-Jr.-TR	Dallas, Texas (Grand Prairie HS/Navarro College)
98	Marcus Bragg	DT	6-4	285	r-Jr.-RS	North Miami, Fla. (Jackson HS/Arizona Western College)
12	A.J. Brathwaite, Jr.	DB	6-0	190	r-So.-1L	Miami, Fla. (Central HS)
75	Gunner Britton	OL	6-6	290	r-So.-1L	Conway, S.C. (Conway HS)
77	Mason Brooks	OL	6-6	295	Jr.-2L	Cedar Park, Texas (Cedar Park HS)
32	Eli Brown	LB	6-2	220	r-Sr.-1L	Bowling Green, Ky. (Warren East HS/Kentucky)
11	Craig Burt, Jr.	WR	6-4	190	Jr.-TR	Columbus, Ohio (Centennial HS/Hutchinson CC)
28	Demetrius Cain	DE	6-0	230	R-Sr.-2L	Princeton, Ky. (Caldwell County HS)
64	Bryson Canada	OL	6-4	290	r-Jr.-SQ	Lexington, Ky. (Henry Clay HS)
60	Bryce Chandler	DT	6-2	290	r-Jr.-SQ	Morganfield, Ky. (Union County HS)
17	Travis Collier	DB	6-1	190	Fr.-HS	Douglasville, Ga. (Douglas County HS)
69	Devante Colton	DE	6-1	250	r-Sr.-SQ	Bowling Green, Ky. (South Warren HS)
23	Malachi Corley	WR	6-0	190	Fr.-HS	Campbellsville, Ky. (Campbellsville HS)
24	Roger Cray	DB	5-9	170	Sr.-3L	Lake City, Fla. (Columbia HS)
23	B.J. Crim	DB	6-1	205	r-So.-SQ	Ocala, Fla. (Vanguard HS)
39	Devvan Darden	DB	5-11	180	Fr.-HS	Hendersonville, Tenn. (Pope John Paul II HS)
53	Jeremy Darvin	DT	6-1	305	r-Sr.-3L	Nashville, Tenn. (Father Ryan HS)
30	Clay Davis	LB	6-2	230	r-Sr.-1L	Louisville, Ky. (Christian Academy/Tennessee Tech)
5	Nick Days	LB	6-3	220	r-So.-TR	Miami, Fla. (North Miami HS/Independence CC)
73	Wes Dorsey	OL	6-7	265	r-Fr.-RS	Knoxville, Tenn. (Grace Christian Academy)
84	Jeremiah Edwards	WR	5-10	160	r-So.-TR	Nashville, Tenn. (Hillsboro HS/Tennessee Tech)
90	JaQués Evans	DE	6-2	240	Fr.-HS	Dublin, Ga. (Dublin HS)
21	Jeremiah Fails	WR	5-11	180	r-Fr.-RS	Orlando, Fla. (Ocoee HS)
76	Mark Goode	OL	6-6	270	Fr.-HS	Hodgenville, Ky. (LaRue County HS)
47	John Haggerty	P	6-5	230	r-Sr.-1L	Sydney, Aus. (Western Suburbs)
50	Wesley Horton	OL	6-3	250	Fr.-HS	Atlanta, Ga. (North Atlanta HS)
42	Jacob Humes	DB	5-11	180	r-So.-HS	Nicholasville, Ky. (West Jessamine HS)
11	Jaden Hunter	DE	6-2	230	r-Jr.-1L	Atlanta, Ga. (Westlake HS/Georgia)
35	Will Ignont	LB	6-1	225	r-Jr.-TR	Huntsville, Ala. (Buckhorn HS/Tennessee)
68	Colt Jackson	OL	6-3	280	Fr.-HS	Bowling Green, Ky. (South Warren HS)
67	Seth Joest	OL	6-3	295	r-Sr.-3L	Versailles, Ky. (Woodford County HS)
38	Desmond Johnson	DB	6-0	185	r-Fr.-RS	Valdosta, Ga. (Valdosta HS)
91	Chase Jones	DT	6-3	290	Fr.-HS	Glasgow, Ky. (Glasgow HS)
34	Juwuan Jones	DE	6-3	270	r-Jr.-2L	Sugar Hill, Ga. (Lanier HS)
36	Aaron Key	LB	6-1	220	Fr.-HS	Tucker, Ga. (Tucker HS)
2	Devon Key	DB	6-1	210	r-Sr.-3L	Lexington, Ky. (Bryan Station HS)
31	Antwon Kincade	DB	5-11	195	Sr.-3L	Jacksonville, Fla. (Valdosta HS (Ga.))

13	Garland LaFrance	DB	5-10	175	Jr.-2L	New Orleans, La. (St. Augustine HS)
9	Xavier Lane	WR	6-4	200	r-Sr.-2L	Montgomery, Ala. (Carver HS)
83	Zach Langford	K/P	5-11	175	Fr.-HS	Clarksville, Tenn. (Clarksville HS)
78	Quantavious Leslie	OL	6-3	300	Fr.-HS	Rome, Ga. (Rome HS)
52	Damon Lowe, Jr.	LB	6-1	230	r-Sr.-1L	Louisville, Ky. (Trinity HS/Eastern Kentucky)
99	Jalen Madden	DT	6-1	300	r-Sr.-3L	Tuscaloosa, Ala. (Northridge HS)
10	DeAngelo Malone	DE	6-4	230	Sr.-3L	Atlanta, Ga. (Cedar Grove HS)
19	C.J. Marria	DE	6-4	250	r-Jr.-1L	Jonesboro, Ga. (Jonesboro HS)
35	KeShawn McClendon	RB	5-11	200	r-Jr.-2L	Clarksville, Tenn. (Rossview HS)
7	Trae Meadows	DB	6-1	190	r-Sr.-1L	Greensboro, N.C. (Dudley HS/NC State/Garden City CC)
61	Jordan Meredith	OL	6-3	300	r-Sr.-3L	Bowling Green, Ky. (Bowling Green HS)
3	Jakairi Moses	RB	5-9	195	R-Jr.-1L	Palm Beach, Fla. (William T. Dwyer HS)
46	Cory Munson	K	6-3	185	So.-1L	Warner Robins, Ga. (Northside HS)
37	Tomi Mustapha	WR	6-0	190	Fr.-HS	Bowling Green, Ky. (South Warren HS)
22	Cardavion Myers	DB	5-11	175	r-So.-1L	Piedmont, Ala. (Piedmont HS)
44	Brayden Narveson	K	6-1	195	r-So.-TR	Scottsdale, Ariz. (Desert Mountain HS/Iowa State)
44	David Ndukwe	DT	6-6	280	Fr.-HS	Lithonia, Ga. (Arabia Mountain HS)
8	Malik Occiur	DB	6-1	205	r-So.-SQ	Oakland Park, Fla. (Northeast HS)
13	Darius Ocean	QB	6-0	195	Fr.-HS	Cornelius, N.C. (Hough HS)
80	Spencer Owens	TE	6-4	250	r-Jr.-TR	Fullerton, Calif. (Lakewood HS/Fullerton College)
93	Wes Pahl	K/P	6-5	185	Fr.-HS	Columbus, Ga. (Brookstone School)
81	Oliver Parker	WR	6-0	180	r-Fr.-RS	Princeton, Ky. (Caldwell County HS)
7	Jahcour Pearson	WR	5-9	180	r-Sr.-3L	Fort Lauderdale, Fla. (Flanagan HS)
1	Tyrrell Pigrome	QB	5-10	210	g-Sr.-TR	Birmingham, Ala. (Clay-Chalkville HS/Maryland)
45	Anthony Polite	DB	5-11	190	r-Sr.-SQ	Elizabethtown, Ky. (John Hardin HS)
55	Daylen Powell	OL	6-4	285	r-Fr.-RS	Hendersonville, Tenn. (Summerville HS (S.C.))
65	Jack Randolph	OL	6-3	285	r-Fr.-RS	Franklin, Ky. (Franklin-Simpson HS)
15	Dezmion Roberson	LB	6-2	200	Fr.-HS	Elba, Ala. (Elba HS)
16	Grady Robison	QB	6-1	190	Fr.-HS	Sammamich, Wash. (Eastlake HS)
71	Stone Roston	OL	6-3	300	Fr.-HS	Brentwood, Tenn. (Brentwood HS)
26	Dionté Ruffin	DB	5-11	185	Sr.-3L	Kenner, La. (Paulding County HS (Ga.))
12	Davis Shanley	QB	6-1	190	r-Jr.-1L	Duluth, Ga. (South Forsyth HS)
97	Darius Shipp	DT	6-1	290	Jr.-TR	Olive Branch, Miss. (Lewisburg HS/Northeast Mississippi CC)
6	Joshua Simon	TE	6-5	235	So.-1L	Dalzell, S.C. (Crestwood HS)
16	Kendrick Simpkins	DB	6-0	195	Fr.-HS	Montgomery, Ala. (Robert E. Lee HS)
2	Jacquez Sloan	WR	5-9	165	Sr.-3L	Atlanta, Ga. (Grady HS)
17	Dalvin Smith	TE	6-3	195	r-Fr.-RS	Glasgow, Ky. (Glasgow HS)
88	Matthew Smith	WR	6-2	195	r-Jr.-SQ	Louisville, Ky. (St. Xavier HS)
18	Tyler Smith	WR	6-0	185	r-Fr.-RS	Ellenwood, Ga. (Salem HS)
70	Cole Spencer	OL	6-4	290	r-Jr.-2L	Louisville, Ky. (Trinity HS)
6	T.J. Springer	DB	6-1	180	r-Fr.-RS	Nashville, Tenn. (Maplewood HS)
51	Rusty Staats	OL	6-4	315	r-So.-1L	Watertown, Tenn. (Watertown HS/Navy Prep)
10	Malik Staples	RB	6-1	225	r-Sr.-1L	Lawrenceville, Ga. (Peachtree Ridge HS/Louisville)
86	Terence Taylor	WR	6-0	200	r-Fr.-RS	McDonough, Ga. (Henry County HS)
3	Lichon Terrell	DT	6-1	285	r-So.-1L	Hogansville, Ga. (Callaway HS)
15	Dakota Thomas	WR	6-1	180	Fr.-HS	Snellville, Ga. (Shiloh HS)
8	Kevaris Thomas	QB	6-4	250	r-So.-SQ	Lakeland, Fla. (Lakeland HS)
92	Terrion Thompson	DT	6-0	300	Fr.-HS	Bowling Green, Ky. (Bowling Green HS)
40	Chase Tidmore	K	5-9	175	Fr.-HS	Franklin, Tenn. (Page HS)
4	Mitchell Tinsley	WR	6-1	185	Jr.-TR	Lee's Summit, Mo. (Lee's Summit HS/Hutchinson CC)
85	Terez Traynor	WR	6-3	205	r-So.-SQ	Louisville, Ky. (Doss HS)

49	DeMarquez Trotter	DB	5-10	185	r-Jr.-1L	Nashville, Tenn. (East Nashville Magnet HS/Indiana State)
19	Dayton Wade	WR	5-10	170	So.-1L	Atlanta, Ga. (Lovejoy HS)
43	Barry Wagner, Jr.	DB	6-0	200	Fr.-HS	Orlando, Fla. (Orlando Christian Prep)
55	Dante Walker	DE	6-2	250	r-Fr.-RS	Riverdale, Ga. (Cedar Grove HS)
5	Gaej Walker	RB	6-0	195	r-Sr.-2L	Tampa, Fla. (East Bay HS)
25	Bryson Washington	LB	6-0	225	r-So.-1L	Louisville, Ky. (Pleasure Ridge Park HS)
20	Devon Wharton	DE	6-3	220	r-Sr.-3L	Hopkinsville, Ky. (Christian County HS)
20	Noah Whittington	RB	5-10	195	Fr.-HS	Fort Valley, Ga. (Peach County HS)
48	Steven Witchoskey	TE	6-2	245	Sr.-3L	Plant City, Fla. (Durant HS)
74	Tyler Witt	OL	6-2	310	r-Sr.-3L	Joliet, Ill. (Joliet Catholic HS)
33	Mario Wright	LB	6-1	225	R-So.-SQ	Chicago, Ill. (Homewood-Flossmoor HS)

Head Coach: Tyson Helton

Offensive Coordinator/Quarterbacks: Bryan Ellis

Defensive Coordinator/Cornerbacks: Clayton White

Co-Offensive Coordinator/Running Backs: Ryan Aplin

Co-Defensive Coordinator/Linebackers: Maurice Crum

Special Teams Coordinator/Safeties: Andy LaRussa

Defensive Ends: Kenny Baker

Wide Receivers: Chris Chestnut

Offensive Line: Mike Goff

Tight Ends: Zach Lankford

Defensive Tackles: Kenny Martin

2020 WKU FOOTBALL NUMERICAL ROSTER — as of August 18

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Weight	Cl.-Exp.	Hometown (HS/Previous School)
1	Tyrrell Pigrome	QB	5-10	210	g-Sr.-TR	Birmingham, Ala. (Clay-Chalkville HS/Maryland)
2	Devon Key	DB	6-1	210	r-Sr.-3L	Lexington, Ky. (Bryan Station HS)
2	Jacquez Sloan	WR	5-9	165	Sr.-3L	Atlanta, Ga. (Grady HS)
3	Jakairi Moses	RB	5-9	195	R-Jr.-1L	Palm Beach, Fla. (William T. Dwyer HS)
3	Lichon Terrell	DT	6-1	285	r-So.-1L	Hogansville, Ga. (Callaway HS)
4	John Blunt, Jr.	DB	6-1	185	r-So.-TR	Arlington, Texas (Mansfield Timberview HS/Cisco College)
4	Mitchell Tinsley	WR	6-1	185	Jr.-TR	Lee's Summit, Mo. (Lee's Summit HS/Hutchinson CC)
5	Nick Days	LB	6-3	220	r-So.-TR	Miami, Fla. (North Miami HS/Independence CC)
5	Gaej Walker	RB	6-0	195	r-Sr.-2L	Tampa, Fla. (East Bay HS)
6	Joshua Simon	TE	6-5	235	So.-1L	Dalzell, S.C. (Crestwood HS)
6	T.J. Springer	DB	6-1	180	r-Fr.-RS	Nashville, Tenn. (Maplewood HS)
7	Trae Meadows	DB	6-1	190	r-Sr.-1L	Greensboro, N.C. (Dudley HS/NC State/Garden City CC)
7	Jahcour Pearson	WR	5-9	180	r-Sr.-3L	Fort Lauderdale, Fla. (Flanagan HS)
8	Malik Occiur	DB	6-1	205	r-So.-SQ	Oakland Park, Fla. (Northeast HS)
8	Kevaris Thomas	QB	6-4	250	r-So.-SQ	Lakeland, Fla. (Lakeland HS)
9	Dominique Bradshaw	DB	6-0	180	r-Jr.-TR	Dallas, Texas (Cedar Hill HS/Navarro College)
9	Xavier Lane	WR	6-4	200	r-Sr.-2L	Montgomery, Ala. (Carver HS)
10	DeAngelo Malone	DE	6-4	230	Sr.-3L	Atlanta, Ga. (Cedar Grove HS)
10	Malik Staples	RB	6-1	225	r-Sr.-1L	Lawrenceville, Ga. (Peachtree Ridge HS/Louisville)
11	Craig Burt, Jr.	WR	6-4	190	Jr.-TR	Columbus, Ohio (Centennial HS/Hutchinson CC)
11	Jaden Hunter	DE	6-2	230	r-Jr.-1L	Atlanta, Ga. (Westlake HS/Georgia)
12	A.J. Brathwaite, Jr.	DB	6-0	190	r-So.-1L	Miami, Fla. (Central HS)
12	Davis Shanley	QB	6-1	190	r-Jr.-1L	Duluth, Ga. (South Forsyth HS)
13	Garland LaFrance	DB	5-10	175	Jr.-2L	New Orleans, La. (St. Augustine HS)
13	Darius Ocean	QB	6-0	195	Fr.-HS	Cornelius, N.C. (Hough HS)
14	Stephone Atkinson	DE	6-3	225	r-Fr.-RS	Lake Minneola, Fla. (Lake Minneola HS)
15	Dezmion Roberson	LB	6-2	200	Fr.-HS	Elba, Ala. (Elba HS)
15	Dakota Thomas	WR	6-1	180	Fr.-HS	Snellville, Ga. (Shiloh HS)
16	Grady Robison	QB	6-1	190	Fr.-HS	Sammamich, Wash. (Eastlake HS)
16	Kendrick Simpkins	DB	6-0	195	Fr.-HS	Montgomery, Ala. (Robert E. Lee HS)
17	Travis Collier	DB	6-1	190	Fr.-HS	Douglasville, Ga. (Douglas County HS)
17	Dalvin Smith	TE	6-3	195	r-Fr.-RS	Glasgow, Ky. (Glasgow HS)
18	Talique Allen	DB	6-1	200	Fr.-HS	Fort Valley, Ga. (Peach County HS)
18	Tyler Smith	WR	6-0	185	r-Fr.-RS	Ellenwood, Ga. (Salem HS)
19	C.J. Marria	DE	6-4	250	r-Jr.-1L	Jonesboro, Ga. (Jonesboro HS)
19	Dayton Wade	WR	5-10	170	So.-1L	Atlanta, Ga. (Lovejoy HS)
20	Devon Wharton	DE	6-3	220	r-Sr.-3L	Hopkinsville, Ky. (Christian County HS)
20	Noah Whittington	RB	5-10	195	Fr.-HS	Fort Valley, Ga. (Peach County HS)
21	Jeremiah Fails	WR	5-11	180	r-Fr.-RS	Orlando, Fla. (Ocoee HS)
22	Cardavion Myers	DB	5-11	175	r-So.-1L	Piedmont, Ala. (Piedmont HS)
23	Malachi Corley	WR	6-0	190	Fr.-HS	Campbellsville, Ky. (Campbellsville HS)
23	B.J. Crim	DB	6-1	205	r-So.-SQ	Ocala, Fla. (Vanguard HS)
24	Roger Cray	DB	5-9	170	Sr.-3L	Lake City, Fla. (Columbia HS)
25	Bryson Washington	LB	6-0	225	r-So.-1L	Louisville, Ky. (Pleasure Ridge Park HS)
26	Dionté Ruffin	DB	5-11	185	Sr.-3L	Kenner, La. (Paulding County HS (Ga.))
27	Omari Alexander	DB	5-10	180	r-Sr.-1L	Louisville, Ky. (duPont Manual HS/Eastern Kentucky)
28	Demetrius Cain	DE	6-0	230	R-Sr.-2L	Princeton, Ky. (Caldwell County HS)
29	Beanie Bishop	DB	5-10	170	r-So.-1L	Louisville, Ky. (Pleasure Ridge Park HS)

30	Clay Davis	LB	6-2	230	r-Sr.-1L	Louisville, Ky. (Christian Academy/Tennessee Tech)
31	Antwon Kincade	DB	5-11	195	Sr.-3L	Jacksonville, Fla. (Valdosta HS (Ga.))
32	Eli Brown	LB	6-2	220	r-Sr.-1L	Bowling Green, Ky. (Warren East HS/Kentucky)
33	Mario Wright	LB	6-1	225	R-So.-SQ	Chicago, Ill. (Homewood-Flossmoor HS)
34	Juwuan Jones	DE	6-3	270	r-Jr.-2L	Sugar Hill, Ga. (Lanier HS)
35	Will Ignont	LB	6-1	225	r-Jr.-TR	Huntsville, Ala. (Buckhorn HS/Tennessee)
35	KeShawn McClendon	RB	5-11	200	r-Jr.-2L	Clarksville, Tenn. (Rossvie HS)
36	Kyle Bailey	LB	6-0	225	Sr.-3L	Carrollton, Ga. (Bremen HS)
36	Aaron Key	LB	6-1	220	Fr.-HS	Tucker, Ga. (Tucker HS)
37	Tomi Mustapha	WR	6-0	190	Fr.-HS	Bowling Green, Ky. (South Warren HS)
38	Desmond Johnson	DB	6-0	185	r-Fr.-RS	Valdosta, Ga. (Valdosta HS)
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44	David Ndukwe	DT	6-6	280	Fr.-HS	Lithonia, Ga. (Arabia Mountain HS)
45	Anthony Polite	DB	5-11	190	r-Sr.-SQ	Elizabethtown, Ky. (John Hardin HS)
46	Cory Munson	K	6-3	185	So.-1L	Warner Robins, Ga. (Northside HS)
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74	Tyler Witt	OL	6-2	310	r-Sr.-3L	Joliet, Ill. (Joliet Catholic HS)
75	Gunner Britton	OL	6-6	290	r-So.-1L	Conway, S.C. (Conway HS)
76	Mark Goode	OL	6-6	270	Fr.-HS	Hodgenville, Ky. (LaRue County HS)
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84	Jeremiah Edwards	WR	5-10	160	r-So.-TR	Nashville, Tenn. (Hillsboro HS/Tennessee Tech)

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89	Joey Beljan	TE	6-3	240	r-So.-1L	Frenchtown, N.J. (Delaware Valley HS)
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97	Darius Shipp	DT	6-1	290	Jr.-TR	Olive Branch, Miss. (Lewisburg HS/Northeast Mississippi CC)
98	Marcus Bragg	DT	6-4	285	r-Jr.-RS	North Miami, Fla. (Jackson HS/Arizona Western College)
99	Jalen Madden	DT	6-1	300	r-Sr.-3L	Tuscaloosa, Ala. (Northridge HS)

Head Coach: Tyson Helton

Offensive Coordinator/Quarterbacks: Bryan Ellis

Defensive Coordinator/Cornerbacks: Clayton White

Co-Offensive Coordinator/Running Backs: Ryan Aplin

Co-Defensive Coordinator/Linebackers: Maurice Crum

Special Teams Coordinator/Safeties: Andy LaRussa

Defensive Ends: Kenny Baker

Wide Receivers: Chris Chestnut

Offensive Line: Mike Goff

Tight Ends: Zach Lankford

Defensive Tackles: Kenny Martin

WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / January 8, 2020

FOOTBALL / Contact: Bryan Fyalkowski

Schedule in JPG format attached

HILLTOPPER FOOTBALL 2020 SCHEDULE FEATURES 6 HOME GAMES, 9 BOWL TEAMS

DALLAS, Texas — With the finalization of the Conference USA portion of the schedule, WKU Football announced its complete 2020 lineup on Wednesday afternoon. A wire-to-wire grind awaits the Hilltoppers, as nine of the team's 11 FBS opponents competed in a bowl game in 2019.

WKU fans looking to purchase new season tickets for the six 2020 home games can secure them thru [THIS LINK](#) with a deposit. Existing Hilltopper season ticket holders will receive a renewal package in the mail from the Hilltopper Athletic Foundation. The WKU Ticket Office can be reached during normal business hours by phone (1-800-5-BIGRED), text (1-800-524-4733) or email (tickets@wku.edu).

2020 WKU Football Schedule (2019 record in parenthesis)

Sept. 5 – UT Chattanooga (6-6)

Sept. 12 – at Indiana (8-5)

Sept. 19 – Liberty (8-5)

Sept. 26 – at Louisville (8-5)

Oct. 3 – at Middle Tennessee* (4-8)

Oct. 10 – Marshall* (8-5)

Oct. 17 – at UAB* (9-5)

Oct. 24 – *BYE WEEK*

Oct. 31 – Old Dominion* (1-11)

Nov. 7 – at Florida Atlantic* (11-3)

Nov. 14 – Southern Miss* (7-6)

Nov. 21 – FIU* (6-7)

Nov. 28 – at Charlotte* (7-6)

Head coach Tyson Helton will be in his second season at the helm of the Hilltopper program. In his first year, Helton was voted C-USA Coach of the Year after finishing the regular season with an 8-4 record and 6-2 mark in league play.

WKU capped its campaign with a 23-20 thriller over Western Michigan in the SERVPRO First Responder Bowl to improve to 9-4, tripling the team's win total from 2018 (3-9) while matching the number of victories from the previous two years combined (9-16). The Hilltoppers' six-win improvement from 2018 to 2019 tied for the third-best in FBS, behind only Navy (eight) and Central Michigan (seven).

WKU will face a schedule in 2020 with a combined opponent record of 84-72 from 2019, including a 30-21 mark from the four non-conference opponents. UT Chattanooga finished third in the FCS' Southern Conference with a 5-3 mark in league play, while Indiana (Gator Bowl), Liberty (Cure Bowl) and Louisville (Music City Bowl) all capped their 2019 seasons with bowl appearances.

Meanwhile, the Hilltoppers' eight C-USA foes have a combined 2019 record of 54-51. WKU will face the other six teams in the league's East Division (Charlotte, FIU, Florida Atlantic, Old Dominion, Marshall and Middle Tennessee) as well as wrap up home-and-home's with West Division foes UAB and Southern Miss, two of the top three teams from that side of the standings.

WKU will have six home games for the second-consecutive season, including a Halloween matchup on Oct. 31 vs. Old Dominion and a Senior Day/Night tilt on Nov. 21 vs. FIU. Other event designations – such as Homecoming and Parents Weekend – will be finalized and announced at a later date. In addition, the Hilltoppers' first four road games (Indiana, Louisville, Middle Tennessee and UAB) are all within four hours driving of Bowling Green.

It is important to note that all games are subject to date changes and some dates are expected to move in the coming weeks in order to accommodate national television. A schedule of televised games will be released at a later date.

C-USA's 16th annual Championship Game, pitting the champions of the East and West Divisions, is scheduled for Saturday, December 5.

HILLTOPPER

F O O T B A L L

2020 SEASON SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	LOCATION
Sept. 5	UT Chattanooga	Bowling Green, KY
Sept. 12	at Indiana	Bloomington, IN
Sept. 19	Liberty	Bowling Green, KY
Sept. 26	at Louisville	Louisville, KY
Oct. 3	at Middle Tennessee*	Murfreesboro, TN
Oct. 10	Marshall*	Bowling Green, KY
Oct. 17	at UAB*	Birmingham, AL
Oct. 24	BYE WEEK	
Oct. 31	Old Dominion*	Bowling Green, KY
Nov. 7	at Florida Atlantic*	Boca Raton, FL
Nov. 14	Southern Miss*	Bowling Green, KY
Nov. 21	FIU*	Bowling Green, KY
Nov. 28	at Charlotte*	Charlotte, NC

BOLD denotes home game
* denotes Conference USA game

Plain text denotes away game
(Dates subject to change)

WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / January 15, 2020

FOOTBALL / Contact: Bryan Fyalkowski

Head shot and action photo attached, please credit "Steve Roberts, WKU Athletics" if either are used

TA'CORIAN DARDEN ACCEPTS INVITE TO 2020 HULA BOWL ALL-STAR GAME

HONOLULU, Hawaii — Former WKU Football nickelback Ta'Corian Darden has accepted an invite to the 2020 Hula Bowl All-Star Game, it was announced on Wednesday. The 74th edition of the contest will be played in Aloha Stadium on Sunday, January 26 at 9:30 p.m. CT and be broadcasted on CBS Sports Network.

Darden's appearance will mark the ninth-straight year in which a senior Hilltopper will play in a postseason all-star game, dating back to running back Bobby Rainey suiting up for the 2012 East-West Shrine Game. He will be the first WKU player, however, to ever play in the Hula Bowl.

The Russellville native [capped his Hilltopper career](#) with 200 tackles – including 14 for loss – six interceptions and 25 pass breakups. Darden is only 1-of-7 WKU defenders in the program's FBS Era (since 2009) to reach the 200-tackle plateau, and his six career picks rank tied for fourth in that same time frame.

Darden redshirted his 2015 season after walking on the team under head coach Jeff Brohm. He saw limited action in the final six contests of 2016 but made the most of it, recording interceptions in back-to-back games vs. North Texas and at Marshall. After officially [earning a scholarship](#) in 2017 Fall Camp prior to his redshirt sophomore season, Darden seamlessly fit into the role of nickelback in new defensive coordinator Clayton White's 4-2-5 scheme.

Darden started 33-of-37 games in the final three seasons of his career on The Hill, recording 71 tackles in both 2017 and 2018, then 54 more in his senior campaign. He recorded a career-high 13 tackles – including two for loss – vs. Florida Atlantic in 2017, and a career-high four pass breakups in the 2019 SERVPRO First Responder Bowl, helping lead WKU to a 23-20 victory over Western Michigan.

The four pass breakups tied for fourth (with many others) in all-time FBS bowl games, with one coming in the end zone to prevent a touchdown and another on a fourth-down attempt by the Broncos with 27 seconds remaining in the fourth quarter that would have put the opposition in potential position for a game-winning field goal. Instead, Darden knocked the ball away from the intended receiver and the Hilltoppers were able to drive into field goal range for Cory Munson to make the walk-off kick.

Darden was [named a nominee](#) for the 2019 Burlsworth Trophy Nominee, which recognizes the most outstanding FBS football player who began his career as a walk-on. He was also voted Conference USA Honorable Mention in both 2018 and 2019 by the league's head coaches.

Former NFL coaches Rex Ryan (Kai Team) and Mike Smith (Aina Team) will serve as the head coaches for the 2020 Hula Bowl. The game will include NCAA football players from all divisions, along with international players from Japan, Canada, Australia and the UK. In addition, the game will always include Polynesian players with historic ties to the Islands.



WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / January 30, 2020

FOOTBALL / Contact: Bryan Fyalkowski

Headshot and action shots attached, please credit "Vol Photos/Tennessee Athletics" if used

HILLTOPPERS SIGN TRANSFER LINEBACKER WILL IGNONT

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — WKU Football signed transfer linebacker Will Ignont, the team announced Thursday afternoon. Ignont — a Huntsville, Ala., native — was previously with the University of Tennessee, where he played in 21 games over the past three seasons.

Ignont held junior athletic status last season for the Volunteers, as he put up 16 tackles over the first three contests of 2019, including a seven-tackle performance vs. Georgia State and a career-best eight-tackle effort vs. BYU. As a sophomore, he played in all 12 games and ranked seventh on Tennessee with 47 total tackles.

With the addition of Ignont, WKU linebackers coach Maurice Crum adds more depth to a linebacker room that brings back starters Kyle Bailey and Clay Davis, as well as reserves Jaden Hunter and Malik Staples. Senior Eli Brown is also expected to work back into the mix after returning from an injury that forced him to miss the 2019 campaign.

Recent linebacker transfers Brown (University of Kentucky), Davis (Tennessee Tech University), Hunter (University of Georgia) and Staples (University of Louisville) have all fit in seamlessly to defensive coordinator Clayton White's 4-2-5 scheme in recent years. Bailey — who is entering his fourth season on The Hill — led WKU with 109 tackles and three interceptions after making the switch from safety back to linebacker (his high school position) in the offseason.

Ignont was a four-star recruit out of Buckhorn High School. He earned 2015 and 2016 Class 7A All-State First Team accolades, was a 2017 U.S. Army All-American Bowl nominee and participated in the 2016 Alabama-Mississippi All-Star Game. Ignont recorded 131 tackles and 22 TFL's as a senior in 2016 after totaling 91 tackles with six TFL's as a junior in 2015.

The Hilltoppers capped their 2019 campaign with a 23-20 thriller over Western Michigan in the SERVPRO First Responder Bowl to improve to 9-4, tripling the team's win total from 2018 (3-9) while matching the number of victories from the previous two years combined (9-16). WKU's six-win improvement from 2018 to 2019 tied for the third-best in FBS, behind only Navy (eight) and Central Michigan (seven).

Second-year head coach Tyson Helton and the 2020 Hilltoppers will face a wire-to-wire grind, as nine of the team's 11 FBS opponents competed in a bowl game in 2019. WKU is expected to return 16 of its 22 offensive and defensive starters, along with two of the Hilltoppers' three specialists.



WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / February 5, 2020

FOOTBALL / Contact: Bryan Fyalkowski

Head coach Tyson Helton press conference: <https://youtu.be/CcJeX5430E>

****Select quotes from the press conference are included in the story below****

****A complete listing of the 22 signees, with their biographies, is attached****

HILLTOPPERS SIGN 4 TO NLI'S ON NATIONAL SIGNING DAY TO ROUND OUT CLASS OF 2020

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — Head coach Tyson Helton and the WKU Football staff announced four new Hilltoppers signed to National Letters of Intent in the Class of 2020 on Wednesday's National Signing Day.

Malachi Corley accumulated 698 receiving yards, 541 rushing yards, 21 total touchdowns and scored 136 of the Eagles' 387 points. He earned Third Team All-State honors from the Louisville Courier Journal in a statewide coaches poll and was named the Kentucky Class 1-A Player of the Year as well as the District 2 Player of the Year by the Kentucky Football Coaches Association. He is currently averaging 15.8 points, 8.1 rebounds, 4.6 assists and 2.4 steals for the Campbellsville basketball team. Corley was rated as a three-star with an 81 overall composite score by 247Sports, ranking 20th in the state. He chose WKU over others such as Eastern Kentucky, Southeast Missouri State and Western Illinois.

JaQués Evans rushed for 2,531 yards on 262 carries (9.7 yards per rush) and scored 42 total touchdowns, leading the Irish to a Class 2A State Title, their first since 2006. He was named Georgia Class 2A Offensive Player of the Year by the Associated Press and listed as a MaxPreps Small Schools Second Team All-American. He also served as the punter and kickoff specialist for the Irish. He is currently averaging a team-high 14.1 points for the 20-4 Dublin basketball squad to go along with 6.1 rebounds and 1.3 steals per game. Evans was rated as a three-star with an 87 overall composite score by 247Sports, ranking 697th in the country among all players, 40th nationally among "athletes" and 70th in the state. He chose WKU over others such as Arizona State, Miami, Tennessee and USF.

Quantavious Leslie was named to the Georgia Class 5A First Team in 2019 by the Atlanta Journal Constitution and the All-Region 7 Team in 2018. Leslie was rated as a three-star with an 87 overall composite score by 247Sports, ranking 574th in the country among all players, 33rd nationally among offensive guards and 61st in the state. He chose WKU over others such as Appalachian State, Florida, Liberty, Memphis, Michigan State, Mississippi State, NC State, Tennessee, Troy, Virginia Tech and West Virginia.

Kendrick Simpkins earned Alabama Class 7A Second Team honors and played in the 33rd Annual Mississippi-Alabama Football Classic. Simpkins was rated as a three-star with an 84 overall composite score by 247Sports, ranking 92nd nationally among safeties and 51st in the state. He chose WKU over others such as Florida Atlantic, Akron, Alabama A&M, Central Michigan, Chattanooga, Colorado, Jackson State, Kansas, Massachusetts, Murray State, Nebraska, Tennessee, Toledo and Troy.

With those four, plus the 15 who inked NLI's during the Early Signing Period on Dec. 18, plus three more (Dominique Bradshaw, Darius Ocean and Tennessee transfer Will Ignont) in-between, WKU has a 22-man Class of 2020 that includes 14 coming from high school and seven from junior colleges.

The Class of 2020 (Alphabetically – Added since Dec. 18 in bold)

S, Talique Allen (Fort Valley, Ga./Peach County HS)

CB, John Blunt, Jr. (Arlington, Texas/Cisco College)

DB, Dominique Bradshaw (West Dallas, Texas/Navarro College)

WR, Craig Burt, Jr. (Columbus, Ohio/Hutchinson CC)
CB, Travis Collier (Douglasville, Ga./Douglas County HS)
WR, Malachi Corley (Campbellsville, Ky./Campbellsville HS)
LB, Nicholas Days (Miami, Fla./Independence CC)
DE, JaQues Evans (Dublin, Ga./Dublin HS)
OL, Mark Goode (Hodgenville, Ky./LaRue County HS)
OL, Wesley Horton (Atlanta, Ga./North Atlanta HS)
LB, Will Ignont (Huntsville, Ala./University of Tennessee)
OL, Colt Jackson (Bowling Green, Ky./South Warren HS)
OL, Quantavious Leslie (Rome, Ga./Rome HS)
DT, David Ndukwe (Lithonia, Ga./Arabia Mountain HS)
QB, Darius Ocean (Cornelius, N.C./Hough HS)
TE, Spencer Owens (Lakewood, Calif./Fullerton College)
LB, Dezmon Roberson (Elba, Ala./Elba HS)
QB, Grady Robison (Sammamish, Wash./Eastlake HS)
DT, Darius Shipp (Olive Branch, Miss./NE Mississippi CC)
DB, Kendrick Simpkins (Montgomery, Ala./Robert E. Lee HS)
WR, Mitchell Tinsley (Lee's Summit, Mo./Hutchinson CC)
RB, Noah Whittington (Fort Valley, Ga./Peach County HS)

Key Numbers

Of the 22 signees...

12 are already on campus, training with the team and enrolled at WKU for the spring semester.

11 different home states are represented, including seven Georgians.

11 are offensive players and 11 are defensive players.

Eight different position groups are represented, including five defensive backs and four offensive linemen.

Helton press conference opening statement: "Had another big day in recruiting, signed four guys today, really fit a lot of good needs for us, a couple guys that we had been on for a while trying to pinpoint. There were a couple – I think we had three guys – that are already here in school that we added during the Christmas break and the holidays right before class started that we didn't get the chance to talk about. So, I guess you could say a total of seven new guys but, our class is up to 22 signed. Like always I talk about it all the time, going to save a couple of spots for transfers or some late guys that pop up but, really really happy overall with the class. You know 12 guys are already early enrollees here, they're already in school, they're already working out, getting ready for spring ball so I think that's really really big. So, feeling good about where we are with recruiting and the guys we got on board here."

Helton, on how the Hilltoppers were able to find the right fits: "Well, I think we positioned ourselves to be in a really good spot after the first signing period. We met a lot of needs but then we could kind of sit back and look at 'OK what are some of the holes we now need to fill?' and I felt like we were able to do that. If you look at it, we signed a good receiver-athlete today, we signed a good defensive end, another good offensive lineman and a defensive back; I call him a DB but he's a kid that can do a lot of different things. So, with all four of those guys, we could kind of take our time and evaluate, get past the first signing period. Almost all these guys were guys that wanted to wait anyways – I think they were smart in planning it out – and I was glad we could get them in the end."

Helton confirmed that a few spots on the WKU roster will remain open for graduate transfers and other flexible options. Please note that team officials are only able to officially announce and/or comment on student-athletes who signed NLI's and/or Financial Aid Agreements.

WKU FOOTBALL 2020 SIGNING CLASS

(Listed Alphabetically)

Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Hometown	High School
1. Talique Allen*	S	6-1	200	Fort Valley, Ga.	Peach County HS
2. John Blunt, Jr.	CB	6-1	185	Arlington, Texas	Cisco College / Mansfield Timberview HS
3. Dominique Bradshaw#*	CB	6-0	180	West Dallas, Texas	Navarro College/Grand Prairie HS
4. Craig Burt, Jr.	WR	6-4	190	Columbus, Ohio	Hutchinson CC / Centennial HS
5. Travis Collier	CB	6-1	190	Douglasville, Ga.	Douglas County HS
6. Malachi Corley#	WR	6-0	190	Campbellsville, Ky.	Campbellsville HS
7. Nicholas Days*	LB	6-3	220	Miami, Fla.	Independence CC / North Miami HS
8. JaQues Evans#	DE	6-2	240	Dublin, Ga.	Dublin HS
9. Mark Goode	OL	6-6	270	Hodgenville, Ky.	LaRue County HS
10. Wesley Horton	OL	6-3	250	Atlanta, Ga.	North Atlanta HS
11. Colt Jackson*	OL	6-3	280	Bowling Green, Ky.	South Warren HS
12. Quantavious Leslie#	OL	6-3	300	Rome, Ga.	Rome HS
13. David Ndukwe*	DT	6-6	250	Lithonia, Ga.	Arabia Mountain HS
14. Darius Ocean#*	QB	6-0	195	Cornelius, N.C.	Hough HS
15. Spencer Owens*	TE	6-4	250	Lakewood, Calif.	Fullerton College / Lakewood HS
16. Dezmon Roberson*	LB	6-2	200	Elba, Ala.	Elba HS
17. Grady Robison	QB	6-1	190	Sammamish, Wash.	Eastlake HS
18. Darius Shipp*	DT	6-1	290	Olive Branch, Miss.	Northeast Mississippi CC / Lewisburg HS
19. Kendrick Simpkins#	DB	6-0	195	Montgomery, Ala.	Robert E. Lee HS
20. Mitchell Tinsley*	WR	6-1	185	Lee's Summit, Mo.	Hutchinson CC / Lee's Summit HS
21. Noah Whittington*	RB	5-10	195	Fort Valley, Ga.	Peach County HS

– added since the Early Signing Period (6)

* – players who are on campus at WKU (11)



WKU FOOTBALL 2020 SIGNING CLASS

Player Bios (with 247 Sports star ranking if applicable)

Talique Allen – ★ ★ ★

6-1, 200, Safety

Peach County HS (Fort Valley, Ga.)

Allen led Peach County High School to an 11-2 record in his senior season, with the team going a combined 48-9 (.842) over his four years. Recorded 87 tackles, 10 pass breakups and three interceptions over his final two seasons. Rated as a three-star recruit by both ESPN and 247Sports, with his 81 composite score by 247Sports ranking 181st in the nation among safeties. Chose WKU over others such as Eastern Kentucky, Georgia Southern and Mercer.

John Blunt, Jr.

6-1, 185, Cornerback

Cisco College / Mansfield Timberview HS (Arlington, Texas)

Blunt, Jr. appeared in nine games in his lone season at Cisco College, recording 25 tackles, 11 pass breakups, four interceptions, three forced fumbles and 2.0 tackles for loss. Chose WKU over others such as Grambling State and Texas Southern.

Dominique Bradshaw – ★ ★ ★

6-0, 180, Cornerback

Navarro College / Grand Prairie HS (West Dallas, Texas)

Bradshaw helped lead Navarro College to a 2019 SWJCFC Title while recording 24 tackles and 11 pass breakups on the season. Was rated as a three-star with an 84 overall composite score by 247Sports, ranking 136th in the country among all JuCo players, 20th nationally among JuCo cornerbacks and 19th in the state among JuCo players. Chose WKU over others such as Marshall, Old Dominion, UTEP, UTSA and Utah.

Craig Burt, Jr. – ★ ★ ★

6-4, 190, Wide Receiver

Hutchinson CC / Centennial HS (Columbus, Ohio)

Burt, Jr. played at Hutchinson CC in 2019 after spending his freshman season at Urbana University. Hauled in seven catches for 141 yards and two touchdowns while helping the Blue Dragons finish with a 10-2 record and No. 3 national ranking. Rated as a three-star JuCo prospect with an 84 composite score, which ranks 19th nationally among JuCo wide receivers and 130th among all positions. Chose WKU over others such as UMass and New Mexico State.

Travis Collier – ★ ★ ★

6-1, 190, Cornerback

Douglas County HS (Douglasville, Ga.)

Collier compiled 24 tackles and seven pass breakups as a senior at Douglas County High School while also adding 15 catches, 171 receiving yards and two touchdown receptions on offense. Rated as a three-

WKU FOOTBALL 2020 SIGNING CLASS

star recruit by 247Sports with an 81 composite score. Chose WKU over others such as Akron, Charlotte, Chattanooga, Jacksonville State, Mercer, Troy and Western Carolina.

Malachi Corley – ★ ★ ★

6-0, 190, Wide Receiver

Campbellsville HS (Campbellsville, Ky.)

Corley accumulated 698 receiving yards, 541 rushing yards, 21 total touchdowns and scored 136 of the Eagles' 387 points. Earned Third Team All-State honors from the Louisville Courier Journal in a statewide coaches poll. Was named the Kentucky Class 1-A Player of the Year as well as the District 2 Player of the Year by the Kentucky Football Coaches Association. Currently averaging 15.8 points, 8.1 rebounds, 4.6 assists and 2.4 steals for the Campbellsville basketball team. Corley was rated as a three-star with an 81 overall composite score by 247Sports, ranking 20th in the state. Chose WKU over others such as Eastern Kentucky, Southeast Missouri State and Western Illinois.

Nicholas Days – ★ ★ ★

6-3, 220, Linebacker

Independence CC / North Miami HS (Miami, Fla.)

Days helped lead Independence CC to an 8-2 record in 2019 while registering 43 tackles, 7.5 tackles for loss and 1.5 sacks in 10 contests. Rated as a three-star JuCo prospect with an 82 rating score, which ranks eighth nationally among JuCo outside linebackers. Chose WKU over others such as Akron, Liberty, Marshall, Morgan State, South Alabama and Toledo.

JaQues Evans – ★ ★ ★

6-2, 240, Defensive End

Dublin HS (Dublin, Ga.)

Evans rushed for 2,531 yards on 262 carries (9.7 yards per rush) and scored 42 total touchdowns, leading the Irish to a Class 2A State Title, their first since 2006. Was named Georgia Class 2A Offensive Player of the Year by the Associated Press. Listed as a MaxPreps Small Schools Second Team All-American. Also serves as the punter and kickoff specialist for the Irish. Currently averaging a team-high 14.1 points for the 20-4 Dublin basketball squad to go along with 6.1 rebounds and 1.3 steals per game. Evans was rated as a three-star with an 87 overall composite score by 247Sports, ranking 697th in the country among all players, 40th nationally among "athletes" and 70th in the state. Chose WKU over others such as Arizona State, Miami, Tennessee and USF.

Mark Goode – ★ ★ ★

6-6, 270, Offensive Lineman

LaRue County HS (Hodgenville, Ky.)

Goode played both football and basketball at LaRue County High School. Utilized as both an offensive lineman and tight end at LaRue, pulling in six catches for 160 yards and three touchdowns as a junior. Rated as a three-star recruit by 247Sports with an 81 composite score, which ranks 21st overall in the state of Kentucky. Chose WKU over others such as Akron, Army, Eastern Kentucky, Eastern Michigan and Murray State.

WKU FOOTBALL 2020 SIGNING CLASS

Wesley Horton

6-3, 250, Offensive Lineman

North Atlanta HS (Atlanta, Ga.)

Horton played in 20 games as an offensive and defensive lineman for North Atlanta High School. Defensively, he recorded 59 tackles, 13.5 tackles for loss and 7.5 sacks over his final three seasons. Chose WKU over others such as Charlotte, Chattanooga, Coastal Carolina, Eastern Kentucky, Georgia Southern, Liberty and Samford.

Colt Jackson – ★ ★

6-3, 280, Offensive Lineman

South Warren HS (Bowling Green, Ky.)

Jackson helped lead South Warren High School to a 10-2 record in his senior season. Rated as a two-star recruit by ESPN, 247Sports and Rivals with a 79 composite score by 247Sports, which ranks 24th overall in the state of Kentucky. Chose WKU over others such as Jacksonville and Morehead State.

Quantavious Leslie – ★ ★ ★

6-3, 300, Offensive Lineman

Rome HS (Rome, Ga.)

Leslie was named to the Georgia Class 5A First Team in 2019 by the Atlanta Journal Constitution and the All-Region 7 Team in 2018. Leslie was rated as a three-star with an 87 overall composite score by 247Sports, ranking 574th in the country among all players, 33rd nationally among offensive guards and 61st in the state. Chose WKU over others such as Appalachian State, Florida, Liberty, Memphis, Michigan State, Mississippi State, NC State, Tennessee, Troy, Virginia Tech and West Virginia.

David Ndukwe – ★ ★ ★

6-6, 250, Defensive Tackle

Arabia Mountain HS (Lithonia, Ga.)

Ndukwe played under Head Coach Stanley Pritchett at Arabia Mountain High School. Rated as a three-star recruit by 247Sports and Rivals with an 85 rating score by 247sports, which ranks 88th in the nation among defensive tackles. Chose WKU over others such as Syracuse, Akron, Chattanooga, Eastern Kentucky, FIU, Jacksonville State, South Alabama and Southern University.

Darius Ocean – ★ ★

6-0, 195, Quarterback

Hough HS (Cornelius, N.C.)

Ocean threw for 1,858 yards and 21 touchdowns as a senior, while also tallying 63 carries for 91 yards and 1 touchdown. Earned I-Meck 4A All-Conference honors. Ocean was rated as a two-star with a 78 overall composite score by 247Sports. Chose WKU over Georgia State.

WKU FOOTBALL 2020 SIGNING CLASS

Spencer Owens

6-4, 250, Tight End

Fullerton College / Lakewood HS (Fullerton, Calif.)

Owens recorded 12 catches for 161 yards and three touchdowns during two seasons at Fullerton College. Is the 10th ranked JuCo tight end in the nation by JCGridiron. Chose WKU over others such as San Diego State and UTEP.

Dezmion Roberson – ★ ★ ★

6-2, 200, Linebacker

Elba HS (Elba, Ala.)

Roberson helped lead Elba High School to an 8-4 record while earning First Team All-State honors as a senior. Rated as a three-star recruit by 247Sports with an 80 composite score, which ranks 103rd overall in the state of Alabama.

Grady Robison – ★ ★ ★

6-1, 190, Quarterback

Eastlake HS (Sammamish, Wash.)

Robison led Eastlake High School to a 9-2 record as a senior and is viewed as a dual-threat quarterback by scouting sites. Rated as a three-star recruit by 247Sports with an 83 rating score, which ranks 22nd overall in the state of Washington. Chose WKU over others such as Central Washington, Montana State and Northern Colorado.

Darius Shipp – ★ ★ ★

6-1, 290, Defensive Tackle

Northeast Mississippi CC / Lewisburg HS (Olive Branch, Miss.)

Shipp spent two seasons at Northeast Mississippi CC where he registered 50 tackles, 11.0 tackles for loss, 5.0 sacks and two forced fumbles. Rated as a three-star JuCo prospect by 247Sports with an 81 rating score, which ranks 19th among all JuCo defensive tackles. Chose WKU over others such as Charlotte, East Carolina, South Alabama, Southern Illinois and Troy.

Kendrick Simpkins – ★ ★ ★

6-0, 195, Defensive Back

Robert E. Lee HS (Montgomery, Ala.)

Simpkins earned Alabama Class 7A Second Team honors and played in the 33rd Annual Mississippi-Alabama Football Classic. Simpkins was rated as a three-star with an 84 overall composite score by 247Sports, ranking 92nd nationally among safeties and 51st in the state. Chose WKU over others such as Florida Atlantic, Akron, Alabama A&M, Central Michigan, Chattanooga, Colorado, Jackson State, Kansas, Massachusetts, Murray State, Nebraska, Tennessee, Toledo and Troy.

WKU FOOTBALL 2020 SIGNING CLASS

Mitchell Tinsley – ★ ★ ★

6-1, 185, Wide Receiver

Hutchinson CC / Lee's Summit HS (Lee's Summit, Mo.)

Tinsley compiled 57 receptions, 656 yards and four touchdown catches over two seasons with Hutchinson CC while helping to lead the Blue Dragons to a 19-5 record during that span. Rated as a three-star JuCo prospect with an 81 composite score from 247Sports, which ranks 34th among all JuCo wide receivers. Chose WKU over others such as Akron, Ball State, Marshall, UMass, New Mexico State, South Alabama, Southeast Missouri State and Tennessee Tech.

Noah Whittington – ★ ★

5-10, 195, Running Back

Peach County HS (Fort Valley, Ga.)

Whittington led Peach County High School to an 11-2 record in his senior season, with the team going a combined 48-9 (.842) over his four years. Racked up 1,554 rushing yards and 30 touchdown rushes during his high school career on an impressive 8.0 yards per carry. Added 60 catches, 776 receiving yards and seven touchdown receptions over his career. Rated as a three-star recruit by ESPN with a 73 scout grade, which ranks 159th overall in the state of Georgia. Chose WKU over others such as Army and South Alabama.

WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / February 7, 2020

FOOTBALL / Contact: Bryan Fyalkowski

Headshot and action shots attached, please credit "UT Chattanooga Athletics" if used

HILLTOPPERS ANNOUNCE KENNY BAKER AS DEFENSIVE ENDS COACH

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — The next man in charge of WKU Football's dominant defensive ends group will be Kenny Baker, after the departure of former coach Jimmy Lindsey.

"I'm grateful for the opportunity to be a part of the program that Coach Helton is building here at WKU," Baker said. "I'm looking forward to working with an outstanding group of student-athletes that has been assembled here, helping to continue their growth and progress as young men and football players."

Baker looks to provide his expertise to the productive defensive ends position. Two Hilltopper starters, DeAngelo Malone and Juwuan Jones, are returning and poised to build on a tremendous season in 2019. Malone earned the Conference USA Defensive Player of the Year Award while recording 99 tackles, 11.5 sacks and 21 tackles for loss. Meanwhile, Jones recorded 55 tackles, seven sacks and 12.5 TFL's.

"Coach Baker is very familiar with what we do here and that was important to me to keep that continuity, but he's also a guy that has his own flair on things," head coach Tyson Helton said. "You have to have a guy who can walk in the room as a coach that the players will feel comfortable with and can take them to the next level ... I think we hit a homerun with him, I really do."

Baker spent his last season coaching defensive line at UT Chattanooga. He joined the Mocs after five seasons in the same role at Mercer from 2014-18.

Last year at UTC, he coached some great players on the defensive line. Khayyan Edwards and Telvin Jones were both Second Team All-SoCon selections, while Devonsha Maxwell was a Hero Sports Sophomore All-American.

Edwards was third on the team with 48 tackles, six TFL's and 2.5 sacks. Jones had 37 tackles and was second on the team with 6.5 TFL's and 3.5 sacks. Maxwell was a First Team All-SoCon selection after leading the Mocs with seven sacks. He was also second in the league with 13 TFL's. He also added 46 tackles and three quarterback hurries.

At Mercer, his defensive line played an important role in Mercer leading the SoCon in turnovers gained and turnover margin in 2017. Mercer managed to tally over 21 turnovers gained for four years in a row. The 2015 Mercer team was one of the best against the run in the SoCon. They allowed 171.3 rushing yards per game.

Prior to his days at Mercer, Baker was the co-defensive coordinator and linebackers coach at Berry College. He was the student assistant for Rusty Wright at the linebacker position in 2009. Baker also served as defensive coordinator at Augusta's Lakeside High School from 2010-12.

Baker is a native of Cartersville, Ga., and chose to attend school at Gardner-Webb. He was a four-year letterman from 2005-08 and three-year starter on the defensive line. He was selected as a team captain and earned the team's Defensive Player of the Year award in 2007. He earned a B.S. in Health & Physical Education in 2009 and went on to earn a Master's Degree in Higher Education Leadership from Mercer in 2018.



WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / February 20, 2020

FOOTBALL / Contact: Bryan Fyalkowski

SPRING BALL STARTS MARCH 17; RED vs. WHITE SPRING GAME SET FOR APRIL 18

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — WKU Football will start official Spring Ball practices on March 17, with 13 more scheduled over the month to follow leading up to the Red vs. White Spring Game on April 18 at 2 p.m. at Houchens-Smith Stadium.

WKU will practice three times per week – primarily on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday (but see below list for full schedule) – with weekday practices scheduled for 4 p.m. and Saturday practices for 10 a.m. Practices are open to the public, although please note that times and dates are subject to change without a formal announcement.

There will be free admission for all fans at the Red vs. White Spring Game.

Head coach Tyson Helton will be in his second season at the helm of the Hilltopper program. In his first year, Helton was voted C-USA Coach of the Year after finishing the regular season with an 8-4 record and 6-2 mark in league play.

WKU capped its campaign with a 23-20 thriller over Western Michigan in the SERVPRO First Responder Bowl to improve to 9-4, tripling the team's win total from 2018 (3-9) while matching the number of victories from the previous two years combined (9-16). The Hilltoppers' six-win improvement from 2018 to 2019 tied for the third-best in FBS, behind only Navy (eight) and Central Michigan (seven).

WKU added [21 new players](#) combined in the Class of 2020 from the Early Signing Period on Dec. 18 and National Signing Day on Feb. 5. Additionally, on Jan. 30 it was announced that linebacker [Will Ignont](#) would also join the Hilltoppers after transferring from the University of Tennessee. Of those 22, 12 are already on campus, training with the team and enrolled at WKU for the spring semester.

The Hilltoppers will face a wire-to-wire grind in their [2020 schedule](#), as nine of the team's 11 FBS opponents competed in a bowl game in 2019. WKU is expected to return 16 of its 22 offensive and defensive starters, along with two of the Hilltoppers' three specialists. Click [HERE](#) to place a deposit and reserve season tickets.

WKU 2020 Spring Ball Schedule

- Tuesday, March 17 – 4 p.m.
- Thursday, March 19 – 4 p.m.
- Saturday, March 21 – 10 a.m.
- Monday, March 23 – 4 p.m.
- Thursday, March 26 – 4 p.m.
- Saturday, March 28 – 10 a.m.
- Tuesday, March 31 – 4 p.m.
- Thursday, April 2 – 4 p.m.
- Saturday, April 4 – 10 a.m.
- Tuesday, April 7 – 4 p.m.
- Wednesday, April 8 – 4 p.m.
- Thursday, April 9 – 4 p.m.
- Tuesday, April 14 – 4 p.m.
- Thursday, April 16 – 4 p.m.
- **Red vs. White Spring Game, Saturday, April 18 – 2 p.m.**

WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / February 25, 2020

FOOTBALL / Contact: Bryan Fyalkowski

HILLTOPPER FOOTBALL ANNOUNCES 2020 SUMMER CAMP SCHEDULE

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — WKU Football announced its schedule of summer camps for 2020, with options available for a variety of ages and skill levels. All camps are located at Houchens-Smith Stadium, home of head coach Tyson Helton's Hilltoppers.

Prospect Camp #1 — June 7 — [Register](#)

Youth Camp — June 8-10 — [Register](#)

OL/DL Camp — June 11 — [Register](#)

Specialists Camp — June 11 — [Register](#)

Prospect Camp #2 — June 13 — [Register](#)

Prospect Camps on June 7 and June 13 will be for players in grades 9-and-up. No helmets or pads are required; players will only need cleats, shorts and a t-shirt.

A three-day Youth Camp will be from June 8-10, for players in grades 1-to-8. This is a non-padded camp; players will only need shoes, shorts and a t-shirt.

An OL/DL Camp will be on June 11 for players in grades 7-and-up. Helmet and shoulder pads are required, along with cleats, shorts and a t-shirt.

A Specialists Camp for kickers, punters and long snappers will be on June 11 for players in grades 7-and-up. No helmets or pads are required; players will only need cleats, shorts and a t-shirt.

Prices vary depending on the camp. There is a WKU Faculty discount for the Youth Camp only. For more information, please visit www.WKUFootballCamps.com.

WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / February 26, 2020

FOOTBALL / Contact: Bryan Fyalkowski

Headshot and action shots attached, please credit "North Alabama Athletics" if used

HILLTOPPERS ANNOUNCE RYAN APLIN AS CO-OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR AND RB'S COACH

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — WKU Football has brought in a new face to the offensive coaches room, with the Hilltoppers announcing the hiring of Ryan Aplin as co-offensive coordinator and running backs coach. Aplin comes to The Hill after two seasons as offensive coordinator at the University of North Alabama.

With the addition of Aplin, Bryan Ellis will still retain his title of offensive coordinator. In addition, head coach Tyson Helton announced that going into his fourth year on The Hill, linebackers coach Maurice Crum will become co-defensive coordinator, while Clayton White will still retain his title of defensive coordinator.

This past year, the Lions averaged 26.2 points per game as the aerial attack shined. UNA averaged 285 pass yards per game as the team eclipsed the 3,000-yard mark over the 11-game season. Quarterback Christian Lopez went to many different options, as there were four different wide receivers with at least 25 receptions, 550 yards and two touchdowns.

In 2018, he helped lead the Lions to a 7-3 record in the program's first season in Division I Football Championship Subdivision (FCS).

That year, the Lions mastered four fourth-quarter come-from-behind wins, while and the team set a school record with the fewest turnovers in a season in school history with only nine. UNA quarterback Christian Lopez also set a school individual record by throwing 253 consecutive passes without an interception.

Aplin was previously UNA's receivers coach in 2016, then took a position as receivers coach at the University of Tennessee-Chattanooga in 2017 before returning to UNA as offensive coordinator.

During his previous stint with the Lions in 2016, UNA posted an 11-2 record, won the Gulf South Conference and Super Region 2 Championships and advanced to the NCAA Division II National Championship Game.

Prior to coming to UNA, Aplin served as a graduate assistant coach at Auburn University under Gus Malzahn for two years from 2014-15 while earning a master's degree in adult education. He spent the 2013 as an administrative assistant at Ole Miss under Hugh Freeze.

A former two-time Sun Belt Conference Player of the Year at quarterback for Arkansas State University where he played under both Freeze and Malzahn, Aplin led the Redwolves to back-to-back conference championships in 2011 and 2012. He became the first in Sun Belt Conference history to earn the Male Student-Athlete of the Year award twice.

Under Freeze's tutelage in 2011, Aplin threw for 3,588 yards and 19 touchdowns and rushed for 10 more scores. With Malzahn's help in 2012, Aplin upped his accuracy to 68 percent and threw only four interceptions. He was responsible for 30 total touchdowns; throwing for 24 while rushing for six more.

He completed his four-year career with more than 25 combined single-game, season and career school records and became the Sun Belt Conference's all-time leader in completions, passing yards and total offense.

Aplin is originally from Tampa, Fla., and graduated from Fleming Island High School near Jacksonville. He earned a bachelor's degree in exercise science from ASU in 2012 with a cumulative GPA over 3.3.

He is married to the former Victoria Price of Fleming Island, Fla., and they have two sons, Maverick and Hawkins, and a daughter, Naomi.





WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / April 2, 2020

FOOTBALL / Contact: Bryan Fyalkowski

Head Coach Tyson Helton on WKU's Beyond the Hill Podcast (from March 27): <https://goto.ps/33OoNhb>

HILLTOPPERS ADAPTING MENTALLY AND PHYSICALLY DURING OFF-CAMPUS SPRING BALL PLAN

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — Thursday afternoon was supposed to be WKU Football's eighth on-field Spring Ball practice at Houchens-Smith Stadium. Instead, the Hilltoppers are scattered apart throughout the region and the country, staying home and staying safe due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as they have been for almost three weeks.

On [March 12](#) – five days prior to what was supposed to be the first day of WKU's Spring Ball on the 17th – Conference USA canceled the men's and women's basketball tournaments in Frisco, Texas. Everything snowballed from there, as the COVID-19 pandemic forced C-USA officials to eventually cancel all spring sports competitions on [March 16](#), followed by all in-person spring practices and activities on [March 19](#).

Since then, Hilltopper Football has been proactive about providing its student-athletes everything they might need to succeed in athletics and academics, as well as keeping up strength and conditioning and nutritional programs.

Head Coach Tyson Helton and a pair of WKU seniors – defensive back Trae Meadows and offensive guard Tyler Witt – participated in a Zoom conference call this week to discuss how they have been able to continue to get better at a time of uncertainty for our Hilltopper community, the country and the world.

"We're in a really healthy place in a time when there's a lot of uncertainty and all those kinds of things – we're about in as good a place as we can be," Helton said. "I thought the powers that be in charge – from [WKU President] Tim Caboni to [Director of Athletics] Todd Stewart – did such a great job seeing what was going to happen, and it gave us a lot of lead being able to prepare for what was coming."

A couple days per week, each assistant coach holds meetings with their position group through Zoom – self-described as "the leader in modern enterprise video communications" – which allows the players and coaches to interact through audio and video channels. There are even screen-sharing capabilities, which is very helpful for coaches trying to keep things creative and engaging while showing film study.

"When you're looking at people and talking to them online, it's important to get feedback to make sure they completely understand the concepts – and our guys have been pretty interactive," Helton said. "My hat's off to our assistant coaches, they're doing an unbelievable job. I've challenged them to be creative in what they do and they've been phenomenal."

Meadows and Witt have enjoyed being able to connect with their teammates during Zoom meetings and through group text chats. There is a constant stream of communication, whether it's football-related business or just keeping things light and messing around.

Still, the fact of the matter is that they're physically away from their Hilltopper Family when they normally would be around each other all the time, and that has been an adjustment in and of itself.

"I definitely do miss the locker room, being around the guys it's like a family in there," Meadows said. "Even though we work, we have fun too. We're a team and we're a brotherhood."

A veteran group that will feature about 30 seniors on the 2020 roster and around 18 of the 25 starting positions (11 offense, 11 defense and three specialists), the Hilltoppers feel confident that the older players will be able to keep things in perspective during this unique situation.

"Having players returning on both sides of the ball helps a lot," Meadows said. "Even though we have to be refreshing our tools and things of that nature, we pretty much know what's going on within our program and within our system and how we

want things to go. We have that leadership to bring the younger guys up and let them know not to worry, it's going to be alright."

In addition to using the Zoom app to help keep the team mentally sharp, third-year Director of Strength and Conditioning Jason Veltkamp and his staff have been vital to making sure the players have everything they need in order to stay physically prepared.

Using BridgeAthletic, the strength and conditioning staff has been able to upload specific workout plans for every Hilltopper. Then, the players are able to respond by uploading their results and keeping track of what they've done and for how long every day – they can even upload videos to make sure their form is correct and to get other feedback.

Of course, players are in many different situations right now – some have access to traditional gym equipment and some don't – but the strength and conditioning staff has been able to solve all those issues on the fly and give personalized regimens.

Meanwhile, the nutritional staff has been able to ship supplements and shakes to each player, and the equipment staff has been able to ship any kind of workout apparel and gear they might need.

Helton knows all of this is key to keeping the Hilltoppers in the best possible physical shape – considering this situation – because that will be the most difficult adjustment whenever in-person practices resume.

"Football is a contact sport and you just can't make up for that," Helton said. "All the weightlifting and nutrition gives you a good foundation, but once we get back we have to get back into the football part of it and that will take some time."

Witt brought up a few examples of how his fellow offensive linemen have been able to adjust. Like Cole Spencer, who was able to get a set of weights to set up in his basement in Louisville, and Woodford Lankford, who has set up a gym in his family barn outside of Lexington and has been doing "real country-boy stuff" like pulling tires.

Whether it has been pulling tires, lifting water jugs, curling bean cans or tossing rocks, WKU players know they have to keep motivated, working on whatever they can to stay engaged.

"You start wishing you had Spring Ball because you have different aspects you can improve upon by actually doing it and physically practicing," he said. "But there's really nothing we can do about that, so the mental side is even more important right now ... You need to make sure you know what you're doing and what your responsibilities are so you can be relied upon when the time comes."

Witt continued, "When we do come back, it's going to really show who did the work and who didn't. There are going to be people who aren't going to put in the work that we are, so this is our time to kind of get that edge. We may not be in [traditional] Spring Ball, but this is the new path we have to take to take those next steps for next season."

WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / May 17, 2020

FOOTBALL / Contact: Bryan Fyalkowski

Headshot and action shots attached, please credit "Maryland Athletics" if used

HILLTOPPERS ADD GRADUATE TRANSFER QUARTERBACK TYRRELL PIGROME

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — Graduate transfer quarterback Tyrrell Pigrome has signed with WKU Football, it was announced Sunday afternoon. Pigrome – a Birmingham, Ala., native – [was previously with the University of Maryland](#), where he accumulated 2,407 total yards of offense in 34 games, seven of those being starts.

With the addition of Pigrome, WKU offensive coordinator Bryan Ellis adds more talent, depth and competition to a quarterback room that includes returning Hilltoppers Davis Shanley and Kevaris Thomas, as well as incoming true freshmen Darius Ocean and Grady Robison.

As a true freshman for the Terrapins in 2016, Pigrome appeared in 11 games – including a start vs. Minnesota – totaling 322 yards passing and two touchdowns. In addition, he ranked third on the team with 254 yards rushing and four scores on the ground. The highlight of that season was a 24-yard, game-winning touchdown rush in a 30-24, double-overtime victory at UCF on his first play after coming in as an injury replacement.

Pigrome earned the starting quarterback job going into his sophomore season of 2017, but suffered a season-ending injury in the second half of a 51-41 victory at No. 23 Texas. He had completed 9-of-12 passes for two touchdowns, while rushing 11 times for 64 yards and one score.

Pigrome appeared in 11 games as a redshirt sophomore in 2018, playing the majority of the final three contests and starting the last two. In those three games – at Indiana, vs. No. 9 Ohio State and at No. 15 Penn State – he completed 30-of-49 passes for 512 yards, with two touchdowns and zero interceptions. Against the Buckeyes, Pigrome helped lead an offense that scored 51 points in a 52-51 overtime loss against the eventual Big Ten Conference and Rose Bowl champions, who finished with a 13-1 record.

As a redshirt junior in 2019, Pigrome once again appeared in 11 games, making three straight starts in the middle of the season. He became the first Maryland quarterback to start a game in four different seasons since Vic Turyn in 1945-48. Overall, Pigrome completed 69-of-118 passes for 719 yards and three touchdowns. In a loss at Purdue, he showed his versatility with 218 pass yards and 13 rushes for 107 yards on the ground with one score.

Pigrome was the 2015 Gatorade Alabama Player of the Year and two-time Alabama Mr. Football runner-up. He helped lead Clay-Chalkville High School to a pair of state championship games under head coach Jerry Hood, winning the title as a junior. He was named the Alabama 6A Offensive Player of the Year and appeared in the Alabama/Mississippi All-Star Game. As a senior, Pigrome accounted for 62 total touchdowns, passing for 44 and running for 18. In the previous season he passed for 31 touchdowns and ran for 18 touchdowns as a junior.

The Hilltoppers capped their 2019 campaign with a 23-20 thriller over Western Michigan in the SERVPRO First Responder Bowl to improve to 9-4, tripling the team's win total from 2018 (3-9) while matching the number of victories from the previous two years combined (9-16). WKU's six-win improvement from 2018 to 2019 tied for the third-best in FBS, behind only Navy (eight) and Central Michigan (seven).

Second-year head coach Tyson Helton and the 2020 Hilltoppers will face a wire-to-wire grind, as nine of the team's 11 FBS opponents competed in a bowl game in 2019. WKU is expected to return 16 of its 22 offensive and defensive starters, along with two of the Hilltoppers' three specialists.





WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / June 11, 2020

FOOTBALL / Contact: Bryan Fyalkowski

2020 SEASON OPENER MOVED TO THURSDAY NIGHT, SEPTEMBER 3

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — WKU Football has announced that the team's 2020 season opener will be moved ahead by two days. Originally scheduled for Saturday, September 5, the Hilltoppers' matchup against UT Chattanooga will be changed to Thursday, September 3.

In addition, kickoff time for the opener against the Mocs will be at 6 p.m. CT.

It will be the fourth time in the past six seasons that WKU's season opener will be on a Thursday night. The Hilltoppers' 2019 season started with a Thursday night contest vs. Central Arkansas, while the 2016 opener vs. Rice and 2015 kickoff at Vanderbilt were also Thursday night matchups.

WKU's second game of the campaign will be on Saturday, September 12 – the following Saturday – at Indiana.

Second-year head coach Tyson Helton and the 2020 Hilltoppers will face a wire-to-wire grind, as nine of the team's 11 FBS opponents competed in a bowl game in 2019. WKU is expected to return 16 of its 22 offensive and defensive starters, along with two of the Hilltoppers' three specialists.

Please visit www.WKUTickets.com for more information on season tickets for WKU's six-home game schedule. For your assistance, the WKU Ticket Office can be reached during normal business hours by phone (1-800-5-BIGRED), text (1-800-524-4733) or email (tickets@wku.edu).

WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / June 16, 2020

FOOTBALL / Contact: Bryan Fyalkowski

HISTORIC HILLTOPPER COACH JIMMY FEIX LISTED ON COLLEGE FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME BALLOT

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — Jimmy Feix, the all-time winningest coach in the history of WKU Football, is listed on the 2021 College Football Hall of Fame Ballot, which the National Football Foundation (NFF) announced on Tuesday. Feix, who was previously on the ballot in both 2019 and 1997, is 1-of-40 coaches named this year.

The ballot was emailed to the more than 12,000 NFF members and current Hall of Famers whose votes will be tabulated and submitted to the NFF's Honors Courts, which will deliberate and select the class.

The late Feix is the only football coach in WKU's history to eclipse the 100-win mark, amassing a career record of 106-56-6 (.649) in his 16 years as the programs head coach from 1968-83. He was added to the ballot for his career as a coach as he led the Hilltoppers to the NCAA Division II championship game in its first year of existence, 1973, before again taking WKU to the championship in 1975 where they took home runner-up honors in both seasons.

Feix served his alma mater as an All-America athlete, assistant football coach, head football coach, assistant director of alumni affairs, director of alumni affairs and director of athletics almost continuously from his arrival on campus as a freshman athlete in 1949 until his retirement in 1990. He spent 27 years as a member of the coaching staff on The Hill, the last 16 of those (1968-83) as head football coach. Feix passed away in October 2014.

His 14 teams that competed in the Ohio Valley Conference went 67-28-2 (70.1%) in league play, winning or sharing the OVC championship on six occasions -- 1970, '71, '73, '75, '78 and '80. His 1973 team was undefeated in the regular season and rolled all the way to the championship game, finishing the year 12-1-0. The Hilltoppers made the playoff field again in 1975 and advanced to the title game for the second time, but once again had to settle for runner-up honors with their 11-2-0 record.

Feix was named Kodak College Coach-of-the-Year for Division IV in 1973 and '75. And, he was named OVC Coach-of-the-Year three times -- 1973, '78 and '80. In his 16 seasons at the Topper helm, he coached 16 athletes who followed him on the list of WKU football All-Americans.

The playing field at Houchens Industries - L.T. Smith Stadium, where his 16 teams played all of their home games, was named "Jimmy Feix Field" in his honor in 1991. In addition, he and another former Topper quarterback and head coach, Willie Taggart, were the first football athletes to have their jerseys retired in ceremonies on Feix Field in 1999.

Feix was a member of the 10-person inaugural class of the WKU Athletic Hall of Fame in 1991 as well as the head coach of WKU's All-Century Football Team which was named in the fall of 2018. He was also an honored member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes Hall of Champions (2007), the Kentucky Athletic Hall of Fame (2004), WKU's Hall of Distinguished Alumni (2003) and the Henderson County Sports Hall of Fame (1988).

Of the 5.4 million individuals who have played college football since Princeton first battled Rutgers on Nov. 6, 1869, only 1,027 players have earned induction into the College Football Hall of Fame, or less than two one-hundredths of a percent (.02%) of those who have played the game during the past 150 years. From the coaching ranks, 221 individuals have achieved Hall of Fame distinction.



WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / June 18, 2020

FOOTBALL / Contact: Bryan Fyalkowski

Head shots and action shots available upon request

ATHLON SPORTS HONORS 12 HILLTOPPERS ON PRESEASON ALL-CUSA TEAMS

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — Athlon Sports announced its 2020 Preseason All-Conference USA Teams this week, and 12 WKU Football players were among those listed by the outlet.

The Hilltoppers' dozen total ranks second behind UAB's 13, and WKU's four players on the First Team are just behind the Blazers' five. However, the Hilltoppers' eight on the First and Second Team combined lead the league, as do WKU's 11 on the First, Second and Third Team combined.

First Teamers include defending C-USA Defensive Player of the Year DeAngelo Malone, punter John Haggerty, offensive lineman Jordan Meredith and tight end Joshua Simon.

Malone helped anchor the top scoring defense in the league, producing 99 total tackles – including 21 for loss – with 11.5 sacks, 16 quarterback hurries and a fumble recovery returned for a touchdown. Among all returning players to college football in 2020, the Atlanta, Ga., native ranks fourth with 11.5 sacks and third with 21 tackles for loss. In addition, he is only 1-of-3 returning conference Defensive Players of the Year out of the 10 FBS leagues.

Haggerty made an immediate impact in his first season playing American football after coming to The Hill from Sydney, Australia. He also set the all-time WKU program record with 45.9 yards per punt, which ranked 13th in FBS, while his 42.1-yard net average was 10th. He had 17 kicks of 50+ yards after WKU had 18 such kicks from 2016-2018 combined and also had 50+ yard punts on 38% of his 46 punts, which ranked ninth in FBS.

Meredith helped anchor one of the best offensive line groups in the country, as PFF College ranked the Hilltoppers 20th in the FBS as a unit overall, including No. 1 in pass-blocking grade, while surrendering a pressure on only 12.7% of their pass-blocked snaps, which was the eight-lowest percentage in the nation. On an individual level, the Bowling Green native was also named a PFF College Honorable Mention All-American.

Simon had a productive true freshman campaign on The Hill, with 30 receptions for 430 yards and four touchdowns. The Sumter, S.C., native had one score in each of his first four games, including a season-long 77-yard touchdown catch-and-run vs. Louisville at Nissan Stadium. He put up season-highs of six receptions for 106 yards in WKU's First Responder Bowl victory; he was the only tight end in the nation to have 100+ yards in a 2019-20 bowl game.

Each of the remaining eight Hilltoppers honored by Athlon Sports played in all 13 games for WKU in 2019, with 95 total starts last season out of a possible 104 among them. Overall, the Hilltoppers are expected to return 16 of their 22 offensive and defensive starters, along with two of WKU's three specialists.

First Team

John Haggerty, P, r-Sr.

DeAngelo Malone, DE, Sr.

Jordan Meredith, OL, r-Sr.
Joshua Simon, TE, So.

Second Team

Kyle Bailey, LB, Sr.
Antwon Kincade, S, Sr.
Cole Spencer, OL, r-Jr.
Gaej Walker, RB, r-Sr.

Third Team

Seth Joest, OL, r-Sr.
Juwuan Jones, DE, r-Jr.
Jahcour Pearson, WR, r-Sr.

Fourth Team

Devon Key, S, r-Sr.

Starting with the season opener against UT Chattanooga – which has been moved to Thursday, September 3, with a kickoff time of 6 p.m. CT – second-year head coach Tyson Helton and the 2020 Hilltoppers will face a wire-to-wire grind, as nine of the team's 11 FBS opponents competed in a bowl game in 2019.

WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / June 28, 2020

FOOTBALL / Contact: Bryan Fyalkowski

Head shot and three other photos attached, please credit "WKU Athletics Archives" if any are used ... Please see captions for photos at conclusion of email

FORMER HILLTOPPER TEAM CAPTAIN AND COACH JOE BUGEL PASSES AWAY

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — Former WKU team captain and coach Joe Bugel passed away Sunday at the age of 80.

Bugel was a four-year starter for the Hilltoppers from 1960-63, as well as a two-time team captain in 1962 and 1963. WKU's 1963 Tangerine Bowl Championship season – in which the Hilltoppers went 10-0-1 – remains the only undefeated campaign in program history.

Behind Bugel and others on a dominant offensive line, WKU rushed for 2,499 yards in 11 games and outscored its opponents 282-to-79. That year, he was named a First Team All-Ohio Valley honoree, helping the Hilltoppers win the conference title with a 7-0 league record.

Following his playing career, Bugel coached WKU's offensive line for four seasons from 1964-68. In 1967, he lived and shared an "office" with defensive line coach Jerry Glanville, and the two became great friends.

Their living arrangement was a nearby log cabin with no heat and one bed that the two would flip a coin for the rights to sleep in. The "office" was a makeshift working area underneath the basketball bleachers, where the two were fueled mostly by donuts and pizza. After finishing the pizza, Bugel and Glanville would diagram offensive vs. defensive plays on the back of the empty boxes.

After playing and coaching under head coach Nick Denes for his first eight seasons on The Hill, Bugel's final year at WKU in 1968 was the first for head coach Jimmy Feix.

Bugel continued his career as a collegiate assistant coach from 1969-1974, with stops at Navy, Iowa State and Ohio State. He earned his first NFL opportunity with the Detroit Lions as the offensive line coach from 1975-76, then filled the same role for the Houston Oilers from 1977-80.

Bugel was hired to the Washington Redskins under head coach Joe Gibbs in 1981 and subsequently made a name for himself as one of the best offensive line coaches in the sport. Bugel spent the remainder of the '80s with Washington as the offensive line coach, while also serving as the team's offensive coordinator from 1981-82 and then assistant head coach from 1983-89.

Most notably during that time, Bugel was the architect and coach of "The Hogs" – a dominant Washington offensive line lineage that included Russ Grimm, Joe Jacoby, Mark May, Jeff Bostic, George Starke and others. He helped lead Washington to wins in Super Bowls XVII and XXII following the 1982 and 1987 seasons, respectively.

Coincidentally enough, both Bugel (Phoenix Cardinals) and Glanville (Atlanta Falcons) started new jobs as NFL head coaches in 1990. It was Bugel's first head coaching job, while Glanville was previously the Houston Oilers' head coach from 1985-89.

Bugel was head coach of the Cardinals from 1990-93 and compiled a 20-44 overall record. He was hired by the Oakland Raiders in 1995 and spent the next three seasons there, including as head coach in 1997 when the team went 4-12. Bugel would finish his career with a 24-56 NFL head coaching record.

Bugel was hired by the San Diego Chargers for the 1998 season and spent the next three seasons there as an offensive line coach. In 2004, when Coach Gibbs returned to coach Washington, Bugel joined him and then proceeded to continue his success with that franchise. In the '00s, Washington would become one of the best rushing offenses in the NFL with perennial Pro Bowl left tackle Chris Samuels and others leading the way for running backs Clinton Portis and Ladell Betts.

Bugel retired from coaching on January 13, 2010, saying at his press conference: "There comes a time in a man's life to bow out, and bow out gracefully."

Bugel was born in Pittsburgh, Pa., on March 10, 1940. At age 12, he was the starting catcher on a youth baseball team that reached the Little League World Series finals. At Munhall High School, he excelled in four sports; football, baseball, basketball and volleyball.

Upon graduating, he tried out a job at a local steel mill but decided it was not the life he wanted. Shortly after, Bugel made calls to college football coaches. One of which was Coach Denes, who invited him on a visit to Bowling Green and offered Bugel a partial scholarship following their meeting.

Bugel earned two degrees from WKU; first a bachelor's degree in physical education in 1963 and then a master's degree in guidance and counseling in 1964.

Bugel met his wife, Brenda Sage, in 1968 while she was working in the Hilltoppers' sports information office and he was an assistant coach. He asked her to a WKU basketball game for their first date, and three months later were married. Joe and Brenda had three daughters; Angie, Jennifer and the late Holly.

Trophy1 caption: This classic photo – taken on the field following the 1963 Tangerine Bowl – features quarterback Sharon Miller (left), as well as team captains Harold Chambers (center) and Joe Bugel (right) hoisting the championship trophy. WKU defeated the US Coast Guard by a score of 27-0 to finish the season undefeated at 10-0-1.

Trophy2 caption: Co-captains Harold Chambers (left) and Joe Bugel (right) present Ohio Valley Conference and Tangerine Bowl championship trophies to WKU President Dr. Kelly Thompson.

Coaches caption: 1968 WKU Football Coaches (L-R) Head Coach Jimmy Feix, Offensive Coach Joe Bugel, Defensive Coach Robbie Franklin, Offensive Backfield Coach Art Zeleznik, Defensive Backfield Coach Jackie Pope.







WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / July 13, 2020

FOOTBALL / Contact: Bryan Fyalkowski

2020 head shot attached, please credit "WKU Athletics" if used

DeANGELO MALONE EARNS SPOT ON 2020 BEDNARIK AWARD WATCH LIST

PHILADELPHIA, Pa. — WKU Football senior DeAngelo Malone was named among the very best defenders in the country on the 2020 Bednarik Award Watch List, the Maxwell Football Club announced Monday morning. Now in its 26th season, the Chuck Bednarik Award is presented annually to the outstanding defensive player in college football.

Malone is only 1-of-19 defensive ends and 1-of-7 from Conference USA out of 90 total players on the initial list. Voters include NCAA head coaches and members of the Maxwell Football Club, as well as sportswriters and sportscasters from across the country.

En route to becoming the first Hilltopper to be voted C-USA Defensive Player of the Year since joining the league prior to the 2014 campaign, Malone helped anchor the conference's top scoring defense in 2019. He produced 99 total tackles – including 21 for loss – with 11.5 sacks, 16 quarterback hurries and a fumble recovery returned for a touchdown.

The Atlanta, Ga., native set the WKU FBS Era record (since 2009) in tackles for loss, while becoming only the fourth defender in all-time Hilltopper history with double-digit quarterback takedowns. Meanwhile, his 99 total tackles were the third-most by an FBS defensive lineman in a single-season over the past decade.

Among all returning players to college football in 2020, Malone ranks fourth with 11.5 sacks and third with 21 tackles for loss. In addition, he is only 1-of-3 returning conference Defensive Players of the Year out of the 10 FBS leagues.

Starting with the season opener against UT Chattanooga – which has been moved to Thursday, September 3, with a kickoff time of 6 p.m. CT – second-year head coach Tyson Helton and the 2020 Hilltoppers will face a wire-to-wire grind, as nine of the team's original 11 FBS opponents competed in a bowl game in 2019.



WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / July 14, 2020

FOOTBALL / Contact: Bryan Fyalkowski

Full 2020 Phil Steele Publications Preseason All-Conference USA Teams attached ... Head shots and action shots available upon request

PHIL STEELE NAMES 10 HILLTOPPERS TO PRESEASON ALL-CUSA TEAMS

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — Phil Steele Publications announced its 2020 Preseason All-Conference USA Teams this week, and 10 WKU Football players were among those listed by the outlet.

The Hilltoppers' 10 total ranks tied for third with Charlotte – behind UAB's 14 and Southern Miss' 12. However all of WKU's names appear on the First, Second and Third Team combined, which is tied with the Golden Eagles for most in the league.

Just like the Athlon Sports list that was announced last month, defending C-USA Defensive Player of the Year DeAngelo Malone – who was recently named to the [2020 Bednarik Award Watch List](#) – along with punter John Haggerty, offensive lineman Jordan Meredith and tight end Joshua Simon all made the First Team.

For more info on WKU's First Teamers, please visit the [Athlon Sports story](#) from June 18. Meanwhile, on Phil Steele's Second Team were linebacker Kyle Bailey, safety Devon Key and wide receiver Jahcour Pearson.

After making the switch from safety back to linebacker (his high school position) during the 2019 offseason, Bailey led the Hilltoppers with 109 tackles and three interceptions; he was only 1-of-7 FBS defenders with at least 100 tackles and three picks last year. The Carrollton, Ga., native had a pair of interceptions vs. UAB en route to being voted C-USA Defensive Player of the Week after WKU's 20-13 win over the Blazers. Bailey started all 13 games recorded four double-digit tackle performances, including each of the last three contests.

In his third year as starting safety, Key ranked third on the Hilltoppers with 93 tackles and tied for second with eight pass breakups. Overall, the Lexington, Ky., started all 13 games and had four double-digit tackle performances, while recording a career-high two tackles for loss in WKU's 20-14 win at FIU. Key also added a pair of pass breakups in back-to-back games at Old Dominion and vs. Army. In the Hilltoppers' blowout, 45-19 win at Arkansas, Key put the nail in the coffin with a 25-yard interception return for touchdown in the fourth quarter.

Pearson emerged as one of the top slot receiver threats in the nation last season. Only coming into the campaign with 20 catches for 172 yards in his first two years on The Hill, he exploded for 76 receptions for 804 yards and a team-high seven touchdowns. Pearson and former WKU wideout Lucky Jackson were only 1-of-5 FBS teammate duos who each had at least 75 catches and 800 yards. The Fort Lauderdale, Fla., native had a career-high 10 receptions and 120 yards – including a career-long 69-yard score – against the Razorbacks.

First Team

John Haggerty, P, r-Sr.

DeAngelo Malone, DE, Sr.

Jordan Meredith, OL, r-Sr.

Joshua Simon, TE, So.

Second Team

Kyle Bailey, LB, Sr.

Devon Key, S, r-Sr.

Jahcour Pearson, WR, r-Sr.

Third Team

Juwuan Jones, DE, r-Jr.

Cole Spencer, OL, r-Jr.

Gaej Walker, RB, r-Sr.

Starting with the season opener against UT Chattanooga – which has been moved to Thursday, September 3, with a kickoff time of 6 p.m. CT – second-year head coach Tyson Helton and the 2020 Hilltoppers will face a wire-to-wire grind, as nine of the team's original 11 FBS opponents competed in a bowl game in 2019.

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PHIL STEELE'S 2020 PRESEASON CUSA TEAM

1 ST TEAM	2 ND TEAM	3 RD TEAM	4 TH TEAM
QB Chris Robison, FAU	Chris Reynolds, Charlotte	Jack Abraham, Southern Miss	Asher O'Hara, Middle Tenn
RB Brenden Knox, Marshall	Sincere McCormick, UTSA	Gaej Walker, WKU	Tre Harbison, Charlotte
RB Justin Henderson, LA Tech	Spencer Brown, UAB	Tre Siggers, North Texas	Malcolm Davidson, FAU
WR Adrian Hardy, LA Tech	Jahcour Pearson, WKU	Austin Trammell, Rice	John Mitchell, FAU
WR Austin Watkins, UAB	Jaelon Darden, North Texas	Jeremiah Holloman, FIU	Jimmy Marshall, Middle Tenn
WR Tim Jones, Southern Miss	Victor Tucker, Charlotte	Bradley Rozner, Rice	Jacob Cowing, UTEP
TE Joshua Simon, WKU	Sterling Palmer, FIU	Xavier Gaines, Marshall	Hayden Pittman, UAB
C Kody Russey, La Tech	Jaelin Fisher, Charlotte	Shane McGough, FIU	Isaac Weaver, Old Dominion
OL Cain Madden, Marshall	Arvin Fletcher, Southern Miss	Cole Spencer, WKU	Colby Ragland, UAB
OL Desmond Noel, FAU	D'mitri Emmanuel, Charlotte	Manase Mose, North Texas	Alex Mollette, Marshall
OL Jordan Meredith, WKU	Willie Allen, LA Tech	Will Gilchrist, Middle Tenn	Clay Servin, Rice
OL D'Antne Demery, FIU	Robert Jones, Middle Tenn	Spencer Burford, UTSA	Bobby DeHaro, UTEP
DL Keion White, Old Dominion	Markees Watts, Charlotte	Juwuan Jones, WKU	Chris Whittaker, FIU
DL Jordan Smith, UAB	Darius Hodge, Marshall	Juwan Ross, Old Dominion	Eriq Kitchen, Southern Miss
DL Dion Novil, North Texas	Milton Williams, Louisiana Tech	Antonio Moultrie, UAB	Alex Wright, UAB
DL DeAngelo Malone, WKU	Jacques Turner, Southern Miss	Willie Baker, Louisiana Tech	Leighton McCarthy, FAU
LB Trey Baldwin, Louisiana Tech	Jamal Gates, FIU	Tyler Murray, Charlotte	Swayze Bozeman, Southern Miss
LB Tavante Beckett, Marshall	Lawrence Garner, Old Dominion	Racheem Boothe, Southern Miss	Jordan Young, Old Dominion
LB Blaze Alldredge, Rice	Kyle Bailey, WKU	Tyreke Davis, North Texas	DQ Thomas, Middle Tenn
LB Kristopher Moll, UAB	D'jonn Turner, UAB	Kevon Davis, North Texas	Rashad Wisdom, UTSA
DB Brontae Harris, UAB	Rachuan Mitchell, Southern Miss	TD Marshall, UAB	Dorian Hall, FIU
DB Kaleb Ford-Dement, Old Dominion	Nafees Lyon, Charlotte	Steven Gilmore, Marshall	Duron Lowe, UTEP
DB Ky'el Hemby, Southern Miss	Devon Key, WKU	Will Boler, UAB	Zyon Gilbert, FAU
DB Reed Blankenship, Middle Tenn	Ben DeLuca, Charlotte	George Nyakwol, Rice	Richard Dames, FIU
K Ethan Mooney, North Texas	Andrew Stein, Southern Miss	Jonathan Cruz, Charlotte	Nick Rice, Old Dominion
P John Haggerty, WKU	Tommy Heatherly, FIU	Lucas Dean, UTSA	Matt Hayball, FIU
KR Jaylond Adams, Southern Miss	Deion Hair-Griffin, North Texas	Duron Lowe, UTEP	Blake Watson, Old Dominion
PR Talik Keaton, Marshall	Jaylond Adams, Southern Miss	Austin Trammell, Rice	Myron Mitchell, UAB
LS Reeves Blankenship, La Tech	Campbell Riddle, Rice	Nate Durham, North Texas	Jacob Fuqua, UAB

WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / July 15, 2020

FOOTBALL / Contact: Bryan Fyalkowski

2019 head shot attached, please credit "WKU Athletics" if used

GAEJ WALKER HONORED AS A 2020 DOAK WALKER AWARD CANDIDATE

DALLAS, Texas — WKU Football senior Gaej Walker was listed as a 2020 Doak Walker Award Candidate, the PwC SMU Athletic Forum announced Wednesday morning. The Doak Walker Award – named after SMU's three-time All-American – honors the nation's top college running back.

Walker is only 1-of-4 Conference USA tailbacks out of 76 initial candidates throughout the country. The National Selection Committee consists of past recipients, former NFL All-Pro and college All-America running backs, media members and selected special representatives.

After moving from defensive back to running back during the 2019 offseason, Walker ranked second in C-USA with 241 carries and 1,208 yards, while adding a team-best eight rushing touchdowns. Meanwhile, his seven 100-yard performances tied for the most in the league in 2019. On the national scope, the Tampa, Fla., native finished 18th in carries and 28th in yards. Walker made a statement on his very first collegiate carry, rushing for a 68-yard touchdown on the Hilltoppers' first offensive play of the season in the opener vs. Central Arkansas.

This upcoming season, Walker will have the opportunity to run behind an experienced WKU offensive line that includes three seniors and four returning starters. The group as a whole returns over 100 career starts, including Tyler Witt's 31, Seth Joest's 25, Jordan Meredith's 25 and Cole Spencer's 19.

The Doak Walker Award is the only major collegiate award that requires all candidates to be in good academic standing and on schedule to graduate within one year of other students of the same classification. Walker also checked that box, as he earned his undergraduate degree in Recreation Administration from WKU this summer.

Starting with the season opener against UT Chattanooga – which has been moved to Thursday, September 3, with a kickoff time of 6 p.m. CT – second-year head coach Tyson Helton and the 2020 Hilltoppers will face a wire-to-wire grind, as nine of the team's original 11 FBS opponents competed in a bowl game in 2019.

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WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / July 21, 2020

FOOTBALL / Contact: Bryan Fyalkowski

2020 head shot attached, please credit "WKU Athletics" if used

DeANGELO MALONE NAMED TO 2020 BRONKO NAGURSKI TROPHY WATCH LIST

DALLAS, Texas — WKU Football senior DeAngelo Malone earned a spot on the 2020 Bronko Nagurski Trophy Watch List, the FWAA, in conjunction with the Charlotte Touchdown Club, announced Tuesday. It is the second preseason watch list for Malone, [who on July 13 was honored by the Bednarik Award](#), which recognizes the most outstanding defensive player in college football.

The FWAA has chosen a National Defensive Player of the Year since 1993; in 1995, the award was named in honor of the legendary two-way player from the University of Minnesota, Bronislaw "Bronko" Nagurski, who is a charter member of both the College Football and Pro Football Hall of Fame.

Malone is only 1-of-23 defensive ends and 1-of-7 from Conference USA out of 98 total players on the initial list. The FWAA All-America Committee, after voting input from the association's full membership, selects a 26-man All-America Team and eventually the five Nagurski Trophy finalists. Committee members, by individual ballot, select the winner they regard as the best defensive player in college football.

En route to becoming the first Hilltopper to be voted C-USA Defensive Player of the Year since joining the league prior to the 2014 campaign, Malone helped anchor the conference's top scoring defense in 2019. He produced 99 total tackles – including 21 for loss – with 11.5 sacks, 16 quarterback hurries and a fumble recovery returned for a touchdown.

The Atlanta, Ga., native set the WKU FBS Era record (since 2009) in tackles for loss, while becoming only the fourth defender in all-time Hilltopper history with double-digit quarterback takedowns. Meanwhile, his 99 total tackles were the third-most by an FBS defensive lineman in a single-season over the past decade.

Among all returning players to college football in 2020, Malone ranks fourth with 11.5 sacks and third with 21 tackles for loss. In addition, he is only 1-of-3 returning conference Defensive Players of the Year out of the 10 FBS leagues.

Starting with the season opener against UT Chattanooga – which has been moved to Thursday, September 3, with a kickoff time of 6 p.m. CT – second-year head coach Tyson Helton and the 2020 Hilltoppers will face a wire-to-wire grind, as nine of the team's original 11 FBS opponents competed in a bowl game in 2019.

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How to Follow the Hilltoppers: For complete information on WKU Hilltopper Football, follow the program via social media @WKUFootball on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).



WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / July 22, 2020

FOOTBALL / Contact: Bryan Fyalkowski

2020 head shot attached, please credit "WKU Athletics" if used

JOHN HAGGERTY EARNS SPOT ON 2020 RAY GUY AWARD WATCH LIST

AUGUSTA, Ga. — WKU Football senior John Haggerty was named to the 2020 Ray Guy Award Watch List, the Augusta Sports Council announced Wednesday. Created in 2000, the honor is in the namesake of College Football and Pro Football Hall of Fame inductee, punter Ray Guy.

Haggerty is the lone Conference USA punter mentioned out of the 19 initial watch listers overall. So far during the 2020 preseason, the Sydney, Australia, native has also been named First Team All-CUSA by both Athlon Sports and Phil Steele.

Among the statistics used to identify the winner is net punting average, number of times punt is downed or kicked out of bounds inside the opponents 20-yard line, total yardage punted, average returned yardage and percentage of punts not returned with particular emphasis placed on net punting average. The winner must also display team leadership, self-discipline and have a positive impact on the team's success.

Haggerty made an immediate impact on The Hill in his first season playing American football. He set the all-time WKU program record with 45.9 yards per punt, which ranked 13th in FBS, while his 42.1-yard net average was 10th. He had 17 kicks of 50+ yards after WKU had 18 such kicks from 2016-2018 combined and also had 50+ yard punts on 38% of his 46 punts, which ranked ninth in FBS. He had 18 punts inside the 20 yard line compared to only two touchbacks, and nine fair catches by opponents compared to only 19 returns for 130 yards.

Haggerty became the first Hilltopper punter to be voted First Team All-Conference since Brian Claybourn in 2003 and 2004. He also served as the team's holder for freshman kicker Cory Munson.

Starting with the season opener against UT Chattanooga – which has been moved to Thursday, September 3, with a kickoff time of 6 p.m. CT – second-year head coach Tyson Helton and the 2020 Hilltoppers will face a wire-to-wire grind, as nine of the team's original 11 FBS opponents competed in a bowl game in 2019.

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WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / July 24, 2020

FOOTBALL / Contact: Bryan Fyalkowski

2020 head shots attached, please credit "WKU Athletics" if used

DEVON KEY, JUWUAN JONES NAMED TO 2020 WUERFFEL TROPHY WATCH LIST

FORT WALTON BEACH, Fla. — A pair of WKU Football defenders earned spots on the 2020 Wuerffel Trophy Watch List, it was announced Thursday. Senior safety Devon Key and junior defensive end Juwuan Jones were recognized by college football's premier award for community service, among 112 other FBS players.

The Hilltoppers are 1-of-11 programs with multiple players on the watch list; there were 12 overall Conference USA representatives among the 114 total names.

Named after 1996 Heisman Trophy winning quarterback from the University of Florida, Danny Wuerffel, the Wuerffel Trophy exists to honor college football players who serve others, celebrate their positive impact on society and inspire greater service in the world.

In 2019 – his third year as starting safety – Key ranked third on the Hilltoppers with 93 tackles and tied for second with eight pass breakups. Overall, the Lexington native started all 13 games and had four double-digit tackle performances, while recording a career-high two tackles for loss in WKU's 20-14 win at FIU. Key also added a pair of pass breakups in back-to-back games at Old Dominion and vs. Army. In the Hilltoppers' blowout, 45-19 win at Arkansas, Key put the nail in the coffin with a 25-yard interception return for touchdown in the fourth quarter.

Jones has produced back-to-back stellar seasons after redshirting in 2017 to make the conversion from linebacker to defensive end. In 2018, Jones set the program's FBS Era record (dating back to 2009) by a freshman with five sacks while becoming the first freshman defensive lineman in Hilltopper history to earn All-American honors. He then improved across the board in 2019, with seven sacks and 12.5 tackles for loss – more than doubled from six in his debut campaign. The Sugar Hill, Ga., native also produced 55 total tackles, up from 42 in his first year.

In addition to producing between the lines on Saturday's, both Key and Jones excel in the community. This past December, the two [paid a visit to local Dishman-McGinnis Elementary](#) to congratulate the leaders of the month and talk to the students about the importance of leadership in the classroom and the community. They have also participated in team initiatives such as WKU's Day of Caring and events with the local Center for Courageous Kids.

Both Key and Jones have earned bachelor's degrees in Sport Management and are currently working in their graduate studies at WKU.

Since the Wuerffel Trophy Watch List began in 2015, five other Hilltoppers have been named: Forrest Lamp and Marcus Ward in 2016, Mike White in 2017, Julien Lewis in 2018 and Tyler Witt in 2019.

Starting with the season opener against UT Chattanooga – which has been moved to Thursday, September 3, with a kickoff time of 6 p.m. CT – second-year head coach Tyson Helton and the 2020 Hilltoppers will face a wire-to-wire grind, as nine of the team's original 11 FBS opponents competed in a bowl game in 2019.

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