

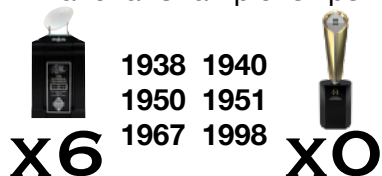


# TENNESSEE VOLUNTEERS

SEC - East Division

## TENNESSEE BIO

National Championships - 6



SEC Championships: 13  
(Last Won: 1998)

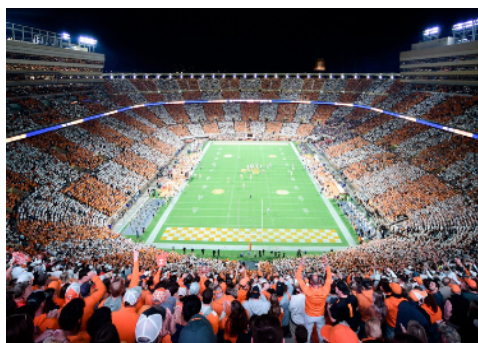
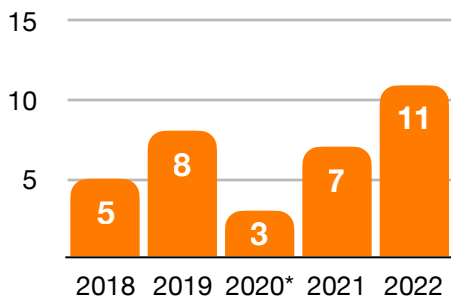
Location: Knoxville, TN

All-Time Record: 843-392-50

2022 Results: 11-2  
Won Orange Bowl

Head Coach: Josh Heupel  
3rd Year (18-8)

## 5-YEAR WIN TREND



Neyland Stadium (102,455)

## The Heupel Hype is Real

It's been a long time since "Rocky Top" was sung as loudly and as proudly as it was on Saturday, October 15th, the same night Tennessee stunned Alabama and the goalposts in Neyland Stadium were ceremoniously carried out of the stadium and dumped in to the Tennessee River. Josh Heupel, who enters his third season with Tennessee, orchestrated a magical season in Knoxville and brought the Volunteers program to heights it had not reached since winning the inaugural BCS Championship in 1998. Tennessee's 11 wins were the most since 2001 and Heupel's team was ranked #1 in the College Football Playoff rankings in late October. A road trip to Athens pitted #1 Tennessee against #3 Georgia and the Bulldogs' ferocious defense finally slowed down the top scoring offense in the country and claimed a 27-13 victory, all but sealing the SEC East title yet again.

Despite the loss, the Vols' CFP hopes were very much alive until a disastrous road trip at South Carolina. Not only did the Gamecocks totally embarrass the Tennessee defense (scoring 63 points, the most points ever allowed by Tennessee in an SEC game) but star quarterback and Heisman hopeful Hendon Hooker tore his ACL on a non-contact play and was out for what was left of the season.

The silver lining to Hooker's injury was that **Joe Milton** stepped in at quarterback and essentially picked up right where Hooker left off. During the regular season he saw spotty action in six games (mostly in "clean up duty" situations) until he started the final game of the regular season. In the finale Milton was barely needed as the Volunteers wracked up a season high 362 rush yards against the Commodores in a 56-0 shutout. However, Milton was finally able to showcase his skills in the Orange Bowl where he completed 19 of 28 passes for 251 yards and 3 touchdowns. He finished the season with a perfect 10 touchdowns to zero interception ratio and is the obvious starting choice for Heupel.

Even with losses on offense like Hooker, blindingly fast wide receiver Jalin Hyatt, and Cedric Tillman, the roster is still dripping with talent. **Bru McCoy** caught 52 passes for 667 yards and **Squirrel White** nabbed 30 catches for 481 yards and a pair of touchdowns as a true freshman. Heupel adds Oregon transfer **Dont'e Thornton** to the receiver room. It's not that Hyatt's speed, incredible hands, and an uncanny ability to take the top off the defense won't be missed, but there are still several good options in the passing game.

The ground game was overshadowed by one of the best passing offenses in the country but was impressive in its own right. Hooker added 430 yards on the ground and Milton is far less mobile but both **Jaylen Wright** (875 yards, 10 touchdowns) and **Jabari Small** (734 yards, 13 touchdowns) return as do several key components of the offensive line. Tennessee supplemented the positions that lack a starter with talent from the portal including **John Campbell** (Miami) and **Andrej Karic** (Texas). **Cameron Seldon** may not see a ton of carries this season as a freshman but is a name to watch moving forward.

Last year's defense was very much a "bend but don't break" kind of defense. They allowed over 400 yards a game but held opponents to just 22.8 points. Except, the defense did break against Alabama and South Carolina. The Vols were obviously able to outscore Alabama but weren't so fortunate against South Carolina and Tennessee and will need better consistency on defense if they are to truly challenge Georgia in the East this season. **Aaron Beasley** is the leader of the defense in the middle of the field at linebacker. His 76 tackles and 13 for loss led the team. **Tamarion McDonald** added 56 tackles and two interceptions and Tennessee added veteran BYU transfer **Keenan Pili** to the linebacker corps, one that could be the strength of the defense. **Omari Thomas** was All-SEC at defensive tackle and both **Doneiko Slaughter** and **Kamal Hadden** return at cornerback.













**The Bottom Line:** Was last year's eleven-win season a flash in the pan or has Heupel already elevated the Volunteers to the top tier of both the SEC and college football in just two seasons? The question will be answered this season. Tennessee must now travel to Alabama and they also pull Texas A&M out of the West. They do get Georgia at home and are the team with the best chance to dethrone the two-time defending champions. The Vols went a perfect 3-0 in one-score games and I don't expect them to be as fortunate this season in that regard but they'll still be incredibly dangerous.

## Projection: 9-3 (2nd in SEC East)

### 2022 Statistics

Points Scored	Rush Yards	Pass Yards	Turnover Margin
46.1	199.5	326.1	+11
1st in FBS	26th in FBS	5th in FBS	T-10th in FBS
Points Allowed	Rush YDS Allowed	Pass YDS Allowed	
22.8	115.8	289.5	
36th in FBS	21st in FBS	127th in FBS	

## 2023 Tennessee Schedule

Week	Date	Team
1	Sat, Sept 2	 vs. Virginia*
2	Sat, Sept 9	 vs. Austin Peay
3	Sat, Sept 16	 @ <b>Florida</b>
4	Sat, Sept 23	 vs. UTSA
5	Sat, Sept 30	 vs. <b>S. Carolina</b>
6	Bye Week	
7	Sat, Oct 14	 vs. <b>Texas A&amp;M</b>
8	Sat, Oct 21	 @ <b>Alabama</b>
9	Sat, Oct 28	 @ <b>Kentucky</b>
10	Sat, Nov 4	 vs. UConn
11	Sat, Nov 11	 @ <b>Missouri</b>
12	Sat, Nov 18	 vs. <b>Georgia</b>
13	Sat, Nov 25	 vs. <b>Vanderbilt</b>

Conference Games in Bold

### KEY GAMES

**Sat, Sept 16: @ Florida** - No matter how bad or good the Gators are in a given season, playing in "The Swamp" is always difficult. Even if Florida is bad this season, they won't realize they're bad by week three and the Gators will be a tough out.

**Sat, Oct 21: @ Alabama** - Don't think for a second that Nick Saban has forgotten what transpired in Knoxville last season. The Tide will be looking to enact their revenge upon the Volunteers.

**Sat, Nov 18: vs. Georgia** - The Bulldogs stymied the potent Vols offense and Hooker was under constant duress and sacked six times. The Vols now host the two-time champs and will have to play their best game on both sides of the ball to have a chance.

### KEY PLAYERS

#### Joe Milton - QB



There's arm talent, and then there's what Joe Milton has: a bazooka. He can flick the ball downfield 80 yards or more without breaking a sweat and he showed off his talent in the Orange Bowl. He still has huge shoes to fill and he'll have to demonstrate that his bowl performance wasn't an aberration but rather a sign of things to come. Losing Jalin Hyatt as a weapon hurts but Hyatt had only 226 yards in 2021 before his breakout season so perhaps there's another hidden gem on the roster that

Milton can utilize in 2023.

#### Bru McCoy - WR

McCoy's path from LA to Knoxville wasn't traditional to say the least. Title IX allegations (later dropped) resulted in a season-long suspension in 2021 and he was finally deemed eligible by the NCAA just a week before the season started. He ripped off back-to-back 100 yard games against Florida and LSU and could be WR1 for the Vols this season.



### 2022 RESULTS (11-2)

Ball State (W 59-10)

@ Pittsburgh (W 34-27)

Akron (W 63-6)

Florida (W 38-33)

@ LSU (W 40-13)

Alabama (W 52-49)

UT-Martin (W 65-24)

Kentucky (W 44-6)

@ Georgia (L 13-27)

Missouri (W 66-24)

@ South Carolina (L 38-63)

@ Vanderbilt (W 56-0)

Clemson (W 31-14)

**TENNESSEE**

### RECRUITING

2023 Class Ranking

**10th**

(Via 24/7 Sports)