



SOUTH FLORIDA BULLS

2023 Record: 7-6

American Athletic Conference

Tampa, FL

FBS Ranking

65

Can USF keep momentum rolling after a breakout season?

HC: Alex Golesh (2nd Year, 7-6)

OC: Joel Gordon (2nd Year)

DC: Todd Orlando (2nd Year)

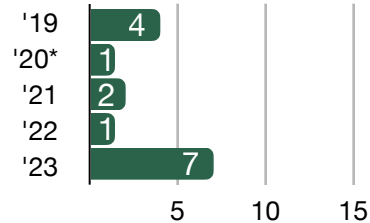
2024 Class Rankings

Recruiting
50

Transfer Portal
97

Via 24/7 Sports

SOUTH FLORIDA WIN TREND



2023 Results (7-6)

- @ W. Kentucky (L 24-41)
- Florida A&M (W 38-24)
- Alabama (L 3-17)
- Rice (W 42-29)
- @ Navy (W 44-30)
- @ UAB (L 35-56)
- Florida Atlantic (L 14-56)
- @ UConn (W 24-21)
- @ Memphis (L 50-59)
- Temple (W 27-23)
- @ UTSA (L 21-49)
- Charlotte (W 48-14)
- Syracuse (W 45-0)
- Boca Raton Bowl



To say the Jeff Scott era didn't go to plan would be a big understatement. Yes, it's true that new coaches starting their first season at a program in 2020 were at a distinct disadvantage. However, a 4-29 record after three seasons represented one of the worst stretches in program history. Enter Alex Golesh, who immediately put the Bulls on the right trajectory. In fairness to Scott, he had at least put together some solid recruiting classes but Golesh was the one who actually transformed the roster into a winning team.

His arrival marks a critical point in the South Florida program. For one, in theory, South Florida should benefit from the new NIL and transfer portal era. Who wouldn't want to play football in Tampa if given the chance? The school is trying to capitalize on the opportunity in front of them and will break ground on a new on-campus stadium sometime in October. In the interim, Golesh has a plethora of returning talent and feels like this team is a legitimate contender in the American this season. He's probably not wrong.

OFFENSE

The emergence of **Byrum Brown** was instrumental in South Florida's quick turnaround from just one win to seven wins in 2023. Brown casually tossed a school-record 3,696 yards as a redshirt freshman and if that wasn't impressive enough he led the team in rushing with 809 yards and 11 touchdowns. Take away sack yardage (can we change the college statistic for sack yardage to the same as the NFL please?) and he was a 1,000 yard rusher. Speaking of sacks, there were far too many of those last season. Brown, along with **Sean Atkins** and **Bryce Archie**, who saw brief appearances in backup duty, were sacked a total of 43 times. That number could have easily been higher, but Brown routinely scrambled away from trouble.

It's a priority that the offensive line step up in 2024. **Mike Lofton** and **Zane Herring** are the two anchors up front. Lofton has appeared in 36 games split between UCF and South Florida in his four year career and he still has two seasons of eligibility remaining. Herring was All-AAC at guard in his first season with the Bulls after transferring in from Florida State. He too has multiple years of eligibility remaining. **Derek Bowman** and **Andrew Kilfoyl** also made starts for the Bulls and **RJ Perry** joins the program from Tennessee.

If that unit gels, then running backs like **Nay'quan Wright** and **K'wan Powell** will see their yard per carry improve. Wright is the featured back and enters his sixth season after a career-best year that included 797 yards and 8 touchdowns. The vast majority of Brown's receiving corps returns including 1,000 yard wideout **Sean Atkins**. **Name Simmons** was a big play threat averaging 16.3 yards per catch and five touchdowns. **Michael Brown-Stephens** and **Jaden Alexis** topped 20 catches and added a combined four touchdowns.

DEFENSE

If the Bulls want to take a step beyond just reaching a bowl game and threaten for a conference championship, the defense will need to take another step forward. To be clear, there was solid improvement in year one under defensive coordinator Todd Orlando following an abysmal season in which South Florida allowed 41.2 points and over 500 total yards per game. There's certainly still room for improvement as South Florida was one of the worst pass defenses again in 2023. There were also small victories like a bolstered rush defense and the sack numbers nearly doubled.

The defense is loaded with experience and 10 of the top 12 tacklers return including linebacker **Jhalyn Shuler** who led the way with 97 tackles, 8.5 tackles for loss, and two sacks plus five pass breakups just for good measure. The returning safety duo of **Jaelen Stokes** and **Caqavouis Berryhill** means the secondary will almost certainly take another step forward and cornerback **Amaris Brown** has snagged four interceptions over the past two seasons.

Up front is where the Bulls defense could shine. **Jason Vaughn** is another "super senior" on this team and he'll slot in at end. **DJ Gordon** is the most productive returning lineman after a strong season that included 3.5 sacks, nine tackles for loss, and 58 tackles overall. South Florida should have decent depth behind impact players like Vaughn and Gordon and may be able to rotate more bodies up front than they have in seasons prior.



JHALYN SHULER – LB

Photo via USF Athletics

2024 USF Schedule

| Wk | Date | Opponent |
|----|--------------|--------------------|
| 1 | Sat, Aug 31 | vs. B-CU |
| 2 | Sat, Sept 7 | @ Alabama |
| 3 | Sat, Sept 14 | @ Southern Miss |
| 4 | Sat, Sept 21 | vs. Miami (FL) |
| 5 | Sat, Sept 28 | @ Tulane |
| 7 | Fri, Oct 11 | vs. Memphis |
| 8 | Sat, Oct 19 | vs. UAB |
| 10 | Fri, Nov 1 | @ Florida Atlantic |
| 11 | Sat, Nov 9 | vs. Navy |
| 12 | Sat, Nov 16 | @ Charlotte |
| 13 | Sat, Nov 23 | vs. Tulsa |
| 14 | Sat, Nov 30 | @ Rice |

Home Away

Key Games

vs. Miami: For the second straight season, the Bulls welcome in a "Power 4" school into Raymond James. South Florida made Alabama's life miserable for much of the contest, can they do the same against the Hurricanes? Could they even pull the upset?

vs. Memphis: If the Bulls knock off Tulane on the road the week prior, this Friday night showdown will all of a sudden hold major implications in the American championship race.

@ Florida Atlantic: The Owls waxed the Bulls in their first meeting as conference-mates last season in the worst game of the season for South Florida. They would love to reverse fortunes in '24

Player Spotlight

Photo via USF Athletics



SEAN ATKINS – WR

Atkins was the primary beneficiary of great quarterback play from Byron Brown. His previous career best year was 2022 when he caught 19 passes for 238 yards and he obliterated those numbers last season. He caught 92 balls for 1,054 yards and 7 touchdowns. Those yards not only led the team but broke a school record. If he can replicate that magical 2023 season, he'll leave Tampa as the school's all-time leader.

2023 Stats: 92 REC, 1054 YDS, 7 TD

Photo via USF Athletics

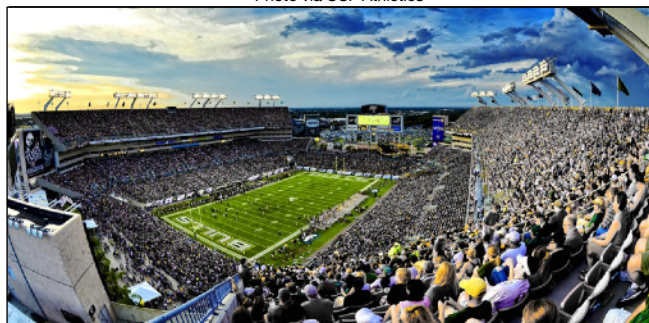


CAQAVOUIS BERRYHILL – S

The Bulls need a steadying presence in the secondary and Berryhill provides exactly what they're looking for. He flourished in his first opportunity as a starter, turning in 53 tackles and three interceptions. Two of those interceptions came against Florida A&M and both plays proved to be instrumental in that victory. He became the first person with a multi-interception game since 2017.

2023 Stats: 56 TKL, 0.5 TFL, 3 INT

Photo via USF Athletics



Raymond James Stadium (65,618)



Byrum BROWN

SPECIAL TEAMS

John Cannon (not a bad name for a kicker) made 11 of 16 field goals with a long of 45 yards and he hit all 52 of his extra point attempts. **Andrew Stokes** handled the punting duties and landed 24 of his 56 kicks inside the 20 yard line. The return game could be a work in progress in 2024.

THE BOTTOM LINE

If you would have sat down with a South Florida fan immediately after the conclusion of a 1-11 campaign in 2022 (with the lone win coming against FCS Howard) and told them in two seasons the Bulls would be an upper-echelon team competing for an American championship, they probably would have thought you were crazy. Yet, here we are. In September, South Florida made Alabama sweat for four quarters. In December, the Bulls boat raced Syracuse for a 45-0 walloping in the Boca Raton Bowl. They'll use that momentum to propel themselves forward in 2024 and there's a real belief in the locker room that this team is a major contender.

This year, the Bulls must return the favor and go to Tuscaloosa and they also face Miami but get the Hurricanes at home. Important conference games against Tulane and Memphis occur immediately following the matchup against Miami, so we'll know pretty quickly just how legit the 2024 South Florida Bulls really are.

Appointment Television



Saturday, September 21

These in-state programs haven't faced one another since their five-game series from 2009-2013. South Florida claimed the win in the 2010 contest but otherwise Miami leads the all-time series 5-1. The Hurricanes have aspirations of ACC contention and vying for a place in the College Football Playoff, which means the Bulls have an opportunity to steal their thunder. How ready will the defense be by the fourth week of September?

2023 Statistics

| Offense | | | Defense | | |
|----------------|--------------|------------|----------------|--------------|-------------|
| Statistic | Per Game | FBS Rank | Statistic | Per Game | FBS Rank |
| Points | 31.9 | 32 | Points | 32.2 | 109 |
| Rushing | 182.8 | 32 | Rushing | 143.7 | 47 |
| Passing | 268.8 | 31 | Passing | 288.8 | 129 |
| Total | 451.6 | 17 | Total | 432.5 | 115 |
| Sacks | 43 | 115 | Sacks | 23 | T-95 |

2024 Projection
8-4
4th in AAC



Trophy Case