

# KANSAS STATE WILDCATS

Big 12 Conference



## KANSAS STATE BIO

National Championships - 0



Big 12 Championships: 4  
(Last: 2022)

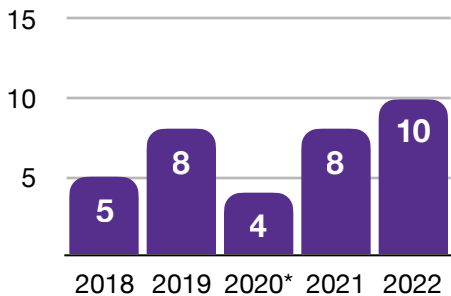
Location: **Manhattan, KS**

All-Time Record: **502-620-34**

2022 Results: **10-4**  
**Won Big 12 Championship**  
**Lost in Sugar Bowl**

Head Coach: **Chris Klieman**  
5th Year (30-20)

## 5-YEAR WIN TREND



Bill Snyder Family Stadium (50,000)

## Wildcats Set to Repeat

It would be easy for a casual football fan to forget that it was Kansas State who claimed a Big 12 title last season, not the Horned Frogs who, of course, made a CFP Championship appearance. The Wildcats won a grueling, physical game in Dallas and pulled out a 31-28 overtime victory to win their first Big 12 Championship since 2012. The 10-win championship season was the culmination of Chris Klieman's rebuild of the Kansas State program. The term "rebuild" is perhaps a bit strong for a team that had gone to bowl games in four of the last six seasons under hall of fame coach Bill Snyder but the Wildcats hadn't necessarily been nationally relevant in that time, either. The script flipped in 2022. Although Kansas State was on the wrong end of the field against a focused and angry Alabama team in the Sugar Bowl, consider that the Wildcats' three losses were to an outstanding Tulane team (Cotton Bowl winners), a loss at TCU which was later avenged, and to Texas by just a touchdown.

To say that Kansas State's run offense is "plug and play" would be doing a disservice to long-time running back Deuce Vaughn who joins the Dallas Cowboys after 3,604 yards in just three seasons with the Wildcats. Replacing his 1,558 yards on the ground and 378 yards receiving will be virtually impossible, but if there's any team poised to accomplish that feat, it's Kansas State and their elite offensive line. Adrian Martinez was a big factor in the run game too as a quarterback and he's gone too. **Will Howard** took over the starting role late in the year when Martinez was out with injury and the transition was nearly seamless. After struggles with accuracy in spot duty during the past two seasons, Howard played well in 2022 throwing 15 touchdowns to 4 interceptions. He can certainly still improve in the accuracy department (just a 59.8% completion percentage in 2022) but his return is creating excitement in the "Little Apple".

Turning the attention back to the run game, the top candidate for the starting running back position is Florida State transfer **Treshaun Ward**. The fifth-year senior had his best season in 2022 with 628 yards on just 95 carries for 7 touchdowns. While he didn't factor into the passing game in 2022 like he did in 2021, he's shown evidence that he can be utilized in that role out of the backfield. Vaughn was superb at catching passes and so was last year's top wide receiver Malik Knowles. Knowles is gone along with several impact receivers. **Phillip Brooks** is the only returning wide receiver who caught more than 10 passes last season. With 45 catches for 587 yards in 2022, he figures to be the top option for the Wildcats. **RJ Garcia** will need to step into a more prominent role and Kansas State will need Iowa transfer **Keagan Johnson** to make an impact from the very start of the season. Thankfully, **Ben Sinnott** returns at tight end and he might be the conference's best.

Klieman's defense has been near the top of the Big 12 the past two seasons and the correlation of 18 victories in that time is no accident. This year, however, Klieman and defensive coordinator Joe Klanderman face a stiff challenge of replacing some of the most impactful players on last year's defense that surrounded just 21.9 points per game. Felix Anudike-Uzomah is the most obvious loss and his 8.5 sacks led the team and contributed to his first round draft pick to nearby Kansas City. The linebackers will likely represent the strength of the defense led by leading tackler **Austin Moore** (87 tackles) and **Daniel Green**. Green victimized opposing quarterbacks twice with interceptions. **Kobe Savage** returns at safety after a second-team All-Big-12 season that included three picks but is the only returner in the secondary. **Khalid Duke** will have to fill the shoes of Anudike-Uzomah after collecting three sacks last season.













**The Bottom Line:** The personnel departures suffered by the Wildcats were fairly steep. On any other team, I would be concerned about a significant step back. However, I have a lot of faith in Chris Klieman to get the most out of his players just like he did last season. He helped build North Dakota State into a dynasty and while I'm not suggesting that he will be able to replicate that kind of dominance here, I do think he's capable of making Kansas State annual contenders in the Big 12 and I am actually calling for the Wildcats to win the conference again in 2023.

## Projection: 10-2 (1st in Big 12)

### 2022 Statistics

Points Scored	Rush Yards	Pass Yards	Turnover Margin
<b>32.3</b>	<b>208.3</b>	<b>210.5</b>	<b>+12</b>
37th in FBS	15th in FBS	93rd in FBS	T-8th in FBS
Points Allowed	Rush YDS Allowed	Pass YDS Allowed	
<b>21.9</b>	<b>150.8</b>	<b>224.4</b>	
29th in FBS	68th in FBS	64th in FBS	

## 2023 Kansas State Schedule

Week	Date	Team
1	Sat, Sept 2	 vs. SE Missouri St
2	Sat, Sept 9	 vs. Troy
3	Sat, Sept 16	 @ Missouri
4	Sat, Sept 23	 vs. UCF
5	Bye Week	
6	Fri, Oct 6	 @ Oklahoma St
7	Sat, Oct 14	 @ Texas Tech
8	Sat, Oct 21	 vs. TCU
9	Sat, Oct 28	 vs. Houston
10	Sat, Nov 4	 @ Texas Tech
11	Sat, Nov 11	 vs. Baylor
12	Sat, Nov 18	 @ Kansas
13	Sat, Nov 25	 vs. Iowa State

Conference Games in Bold

### KEY GAMES

**Sat, Sept 16: @ Missouri** - After playing every season from 1927 to 2011, the two former Big 12 rivals mixed it up in Manhattan and the Wildcats dominated 40-12. Will Kansas State have similar success in Columbia or will the Tigers respond and hold serve?

**Sat, Oct 21: vs. TCU** - After the two teams split games in the regular season and Big 12 title game, respectively, fans will eagerly anticipate this matchup, especially if both teams are in contention in late October.

**Sat, Nov 18: @ Kansas** - The Wildcats may have won 14 straight in this series, but this should be the best Jayhawks team since Kansas' last win. A competitive game would help renew the rivalry.

## KEY PLAYERS

### Will Howard - QB

Quarterbacks like Quinn Ewers, Dillon Gabriel, and Jalon Daniels will get most of the attention, but Will Howard will have every opportunity to prove that he belongs in the conversation as the Big 12's best. The results were mixed for Howard in 2020 and 2021 but something seemed to click in 2022 and now he's being handed the reigns. The schedule is quite challenging, so Howard will need to have the best season of his career in order to guide K-State back to Dallas.



### Cooper Beebe - OG

You're looking at one of the best lineman in all of college football. Beebe was the Big 12 offensive lineman of the year and an All-American and stifles defenses at 6'4", 322 pounds. If he's healthy and dominant again in 2023, the local kid will be a near-lock as a first round draft pick. Before that happens, he'll work hard to protect Howard and establish the run game and more hardware seems like a surety.



## 2022 RESULTS (10-4)

**South Dakota (W 34-0)**

**Missouri (W 40-12)**

Tulane (L 10-17)

**@ Oklahoma (W 41-34)**

**Texas Tech (W 37-28)**

**@ Iowa State (W 10-9)**

@ TCU (L 28-38)

**Oklahoma State (W 48-0)**

Texas (L 27-34)

**@ Baylor (W 31-3)**

**@ West Virginia (W 48-31)**

**Kansas (W 47-27)**

**TCU (W 31-28)**

Alabama (L 20-45)

# K-STATE

## RECRUITING

2023 Class Ranking

# 32nd

(Via 24/7 Sports)