TEMPLE OWLS

2023 Record: 3-9   American Athletic Conference   Philadelphia, PA

FBS Ranking

134

Few programs have seen a rotating door quite as active as the one that has cycled through Temple head coaches. If you include former interim coach Ed Foley who took over on two separate occasions for a bowl game, the Owls have had five head coaches in the last eight seasons. Stan Drayton enters his third season and he has yet to get Temple out of a rut. The Owls have failed to cross the three-win threshold in any of the past four seasons and it will take a big push to top that mark in 2024.

This year, the roster gets a major overhaul with 18 incoming transfers. The moves were out of necessity since 31 players left in the transfer portal this season including two-year starting quarterback E.J. Warner. Will the new faces be able replace the production of the players heading out the door? They'll have an entire season to prove they can, but there are questions that need to be answered.

OFFENSE

The biggest question that must be answered is at the quarterback position. EJ Warner moves on to conference foe Rice (although the two teams don't play in 2024). He posted two strong seasons for the Owls, throwing for 3,000 yards in both his freshman and sophomore seasons. His accuracy dipped last season and he did throw 12 interceptions in both 2022 and 2023 but it will be difficult to replace his skill. Quincy Patterson filled in for Warner when he went down with injury but he graduated. **Forrest Brock** attempted just 15 passes last year but the Owls may turn to Rutgers transfer **Evan Simon** who saw some time with the Scarlet Knights in 2022 with mixed results (4 touchdowns, 6 interceptions).

With the assumption that the passing game will be down a notch, the Owls will need to establish some semblance of a ground attack after averaging less than 100 yards in that regard last season and the unit as a whole averaged just 3.5 yards per carry. **Joquez Smith** is the lone returner after netting 325 yards and a touchdown. Smith is a smaller, speed-first back at 5'8", 190 pounds. If the Owls want a change of pace, they can turn to Maryland transfer **Antwain Littleton** who checks in at 6'1", 240. The receiving corps could also be a work in progress with key departures but wide out **Dante Wright** could be a focal point after a 39 catch, 507 yard season. The tight end position plays a critical role in Danny Langsdorf's offense since there is a lot of 12 formation (two tight ends) employed by the Owls.

There are some questions on the offensive line too. The Owls will need a youth movement from players like **Grayson Mains** and **Luke Watson** who project as sophomore starters. **Wisdom Quarshie** is one of the options with significant starting experience in the past.

DEFENSE

The defense returns only five starters from a group that allowed 35.7 points and 441.6 yards per game. Both categories ranked the Owls in the bottom ten of all 133 FBS schools and they were particularly weak against the run. The top six tacklers are all gone, leaving safety **Elijah Deravil** as the team's leading returner in that category (40). This unit struggled to create big plays which led to a very uncomfortable turnover margin of -20 on the season including -16 in conference play.

There needs to improvement at all three levels, but the best continuity could be found on the defensive line. **Tra Thomas**, and **Allan Haye** return and are joined by Florida Atlantic transfer **Latrell Jean**. Jean is actually the most experienced of those three and posted 24 tackles and four tackles for loss with the (other) Owls.
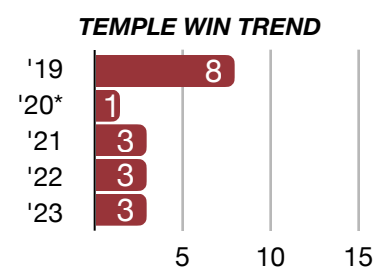
The linebacker corps loses the highly skilled Jordan Magee who was drafted in the fifth round to the Washington Commanders following a season that included 80 tackles, 14 tackles for loss, and 3.5 sacks. **Diwun Black** will be asked to do his best attempt at filling Magee's shoes after recording 29 tackles, 9.5 for loss, and 3.5 sacks. **Torren Wright** could factor in as a starter after transferring in from North Carolina State.

The secondary will look completely different too with several transfers slated to fill the gaps. Those could include **Tory Richardson** who was a full-time starter at UTEP as well as **Andreas Keaton** (Western Carolina), and **Javier Morton** (Nebraska). No returning Owl registered an interception last year, that will need to change in 2024.

JOQUEZ SMITH – RB
Photo via The Temple News

2024 Temple Schedule

Wk		
1	Fri, Aug 30	@ Oklahoma
2	Sat, Sept 7	@ Navy
3	Sat, Sept 14	vs. Coastal Car
4	Sat, Sept 21	vs. Utah State
5	Thu, Sept 26	vs. Army
6	Sat, Oct 5	@ UConn
8	Sat, Oct 19	vs. Tulsa
9	Sat, Oct 26	@ East Carolina
11	Sat, Nov 9	@ Tulane
12	Sat, Nov 16	vs. Florida Atlantic
13	Fri, Nov 22	@ UTSA
14	Sat, Nov 30	vs. North Texas

■ **Home**   ■ **Away**

Key Games

@ Navy: Temple's lone conference win of the 2023 season tied the all-time series between the Owls and Midshipmen at nine each. Temple hasn't won a road conference game since 2019, could this be a chance to break the streak?

vs. Army: The Owls welcome Army to Lincoln Financial Field on a Thursday night. Depending on how well the previous weeks have gone will determine how desperately a win is needed.

vs. Tulsa: The Golden Hurricane face a similar forecast to Temple after a 4-8 season. They hung 48 points and 533 total yards against the Owls. Can the defense step up at home in a revenge game?

Can Drayton help the Owls escape the AAC basement in year three?

HC: Stan Drayton
(3rd Year, 6-18)

OC: Danny Langsdorf
(3rd Year)

DC: Adam Scheier
(3rd Year)

2024 Class Rankings

Recruiting
119

Transfer Portal
85

Via 24/7 Sports

TEMPLE WIN TREND

'19	8
'20*	1
'21	3
'22	3
'23	3

5   10   15

2023 Results (3-9)

Akron (W 24-21)
@ Rutgers (L 7-36)
Norfolk State (W 41-9)
Miami (FL) (L 7-41)
@ Tulsa (L 26-48)
UTSA (L 34-49)
@ North Texas (L 14-45)
SMU (L 0-55)
Navy (W 32-18)
@ South Florida (L 23-27)
@ UAB (L 24-34)
Memphis (L 21-45)

TEMPLE.

DANTE WRIGHT – WR

Wright has been an effective player for four seasons, splitting time here and with Colorado State. The senior has 159 career catches for 2,178 yards and 11 touchdowns. He'll help steady which ever new quarterback starts for the Owls. His seven catch (four in the first quarter), 71 yard performance was instrumental in the opening week win against Akron and he added a 146 yard performance against UAB.

2023 Stats: 39 REC, 507 YDS, 4 TD

DIWUN BLACK – LB

Black only started four games for the Owls, but he made the most of his opportunity. The former #1 rated JUCO recruit in the 2021 class recorded 3.5 sacks and forced a fumble in back-to-back weeks against North Texas and SMU. Temple is in desperate need of playmakers on defense and if Black can pick up where he left off last year (and can play in more than nine games), defensive coordinator Adam Scheier will be appreciative.

2023 Stats: 29 TKL, 9.5 TFL, 3.5 SACK, 2 FF

Zae
BAINES

Lincoln Financial Field (69,176)

Appointment Television

ARMY VS. TEMPLE

Thu, Sept 26 - 7:30 PM ET ESPN

These two teams met in both 2016 and 2017 and Army won both meetings, breaking a 6-game win streak Temple held from 2008 to 2013. For what it's worth, the Owls beat a fellow service academy team in Navy 32-18 last season. A Thursday night primetime window will give this matchup a few more eyeballs and it's a great opportunity for Temple to take advantage of an opportunity to win a home conference game.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Maddux Trujillo is expected to replace Camden Price at kicker. For Austin Peay, he hit 13 of his 15 attempts with a long of 45. **Dante Atton** is back at punter although his averages were not always comparable to others in the conference. **Sam Martin** returned a kickoff for a touchdown against Tulsa as a redshirt freshman.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Temple was gutted with transfers in the offseason and it's difficult to see a path where the 2024 season isn't another losing season. The young Owls will be thrown in the fire early in a Friday night showdown at Oklahoma and they head to Navy after that. Thankfully, there are three straight home games against Coastal Carolina, Utah State, and Army, and it would be good to see Temple competitive in every game and win one or two of those contests. The following two games against UConn and Tulsa are also winnable before the meat of the schedule hits in the final six weeks of the season.

Will Temple be able to find the quarterback they need? Will the offensive line rally together to help establish a run game? Can the defense improve after underachieving last season? Just because these questions exist doesn't mean the Owls can't answer them, but it will be a very tough task, especially considering Temple hasn't had more than one conference win in the last four seasons.

2023 Statistics

	Offense				Defense		
Statistic	**Per Game**	**FBS Rank**		**Statistic**	**Per Game**	**FBS Rank**
Points	21.1	107		**Points**	35.7	124
Rushing	95.7	121		**Rushing**	198.3	124
Passing	276.7	24		**Passing**	243.2	97
Total	372.3	73		**Total**	441.6	121
Sacks	17	29		**Sacks**	22	T-92

2024 Projection
2-10
14th in AAC

Trophy Case

XO   XO   X 1   2016