



MEMPHIS TIGERS

2023 Record: 10-3

American Athletic Conference

Memphis, TN

FBS Ranking

38

Could Memphis become the first Group of Five Representative in the new Playoff?

HC: Ryan Silverfield (5th Year, 31-18)

OC: Tim Cramsey (3rd Year)

DC: Jordon Hankins (1st Year)

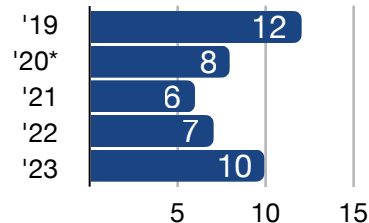
2024 Class Rankings

Recruiting
68

Transfer Portal
46

Via 24/7 Sports

MEMPHIS WIN TREND



2023 Results (10-3)

B-CU (W 56-14)
 @ Arkansas State (W 37-3)
 Navy (W 28-24)
 vs. Missouri (L 27-34)
 Boise State (W 35-32)
 Tulane (L 21-31)
 @ UAB (W 45-21)
 @ North Texas (W 45-42)
 South Florida (W 59-50)
 @ Charlotte (W 44-38 OT)
 SMU (L 34-38)
 @ Temple (W 45-21)
 Iowa State (W 36-26)
 Liberty Bowl

Memphis



SETH HENIGAN – QB

Photo via The Commercial Appeal

Memphis won an American Conference title in 2014 and then won their second championship five years later. We are now five years removed from that championship, so Memphis is due for another one right? That logic is nothing more than a lame joke but what isn't a joke is the Tigers' chances to not only win the conference but to compete for the Group of 5 bid to the College Football Playoff.

The 2024 version of the Memphis Tigers is the best roster that Ryan Silverfield has had in his tenure here and that's saying something considering the ten games his team won last season. The Tigers have never missed a bowl game (the 2021 Hawaii bowl was cancelled) under Silverfield and they've increased their win totals in each of the past two seasons.

OFFENSE

Quarterback **Seth Henigan** would have found plenty of suitors if he jumped into the transfer portal, but, to his credit, he announced just a week after the regular season that veteran quarterback was going to "run it" back with the Tigers. He's already the all-time leading passer in Memphis history and he's going to blow the record out of the water barring injury. He's improved each season since taking over as the starter in 2021 and has three-straight 3,000+ yard seasons. Last year he set career highs in virtually everything including touchdowns (28), completion percentage (66.5%), and yards (3,519). What's more is his two favorite targets also return to Memphis.

DeMeer Blankumsee nearly cashed in a 1,000 yard season and **Roc Taylor** did (1,083 yards) although it was Blankumsee taking the edge in touchdowns with seven to Taylor's four. The Tigers also got contributions from **Koby Drake** and tight end **Anthony Landphere**. The unit as a whole finished with 306.5 yards per game, the tenth best mark in the country. All the while, the offensive line kept Henigan clean and it helps that the senior is mobile and can scramble for yards when needed (274 yards, 5 touchdowns).

The Tigers do need to replace one of the best running backs in the conference last season in Blake Watson but they pulled off a transfer portal thievery by bringing in **Mario Anderson** from South Carolina. He rushed for 707 yards with a 4.9 yard average behind an extremely subpar offensive line. It's quite possible that Anderson matches Watson's production and **Sutton Smith** was effective for the Tigers last season with 305 yards and a pair of touchdowns in backup duty.

DEFENSE

The classic phrase "defense wins championships" has a lot of truth to it and it's also true that the performance of the Memphis defense in 2024 could make or break the chances of a conference championship and beyond. The offense had to outscore opponents far too frequently last season and the Tigers lucked out that they didn't drop any games in a three week stretch where the defense allowed 42, 50, and 38 points. (They did lose the following week also giving up 38 points in a game against SMU that ended their conference title hopes).

Chandler Martin get the defense going from his middle linebacker position. He led the way with 95 tackles and he's part of a group that could be the best linebacker unit in the conference. In another splash transfer portal signing, **Elijah Herring** comes over from Tennessee where he made a team-best 80 tackles for the Vols and started in 12 games. **Tahj Ra-el** will play the "tiger" position after an impressive season for Old Dominion.

The Memphis defensive line will look very different with most of the unit departing. That could be a negative since the players stepping into bigger roles don't have a lot of experience. It could also be a positive since the 2023 defensive line underperformed. **Keveion'ta Spears** started eight games as a freshman and was fairly consistent. **CorMontae Hamilton** added 35 tackles at defensive end. Look for transfers to play a key role here, too.

Seth Hanigan and company torched opponents through the air but far too frequently Memphis found the same medicine being doled out to them. **Greg Rubin** is probably the best returning option from that. Group after making 50 tackles for the second time in his Memphis career. **Julian Barnett** is a former four-star recruit who started his career by playing wide receiver at Michigan State but has since transitioned to corner. He may be asked to take on the toughest responsibilities offenses throw the Tigers' way this season.

Wk	2024 Memphis Schedule	
1	Sat, Aug 31	vs. North Alabama
2	Sat, Sept 7	vs. Troy
3	Sat, Sept 14	@ Florida State
4	Sat, Sept 21	@ Navy
5	Sat, Sept 28	vs. Mid Tennessee
7	Fri, Oct 11	@ South Florida
8	Sat, Oct 19	vs. North Texas
9	Sat, Oct 26	vs. Charlotte
10	Sat, Nov 2	@ UTSA
11	Fri, Nov 8	vs. Rice
12	Sat, Nov 16	vs. UAB
14	Thu, Nov 28	@ Tulane

■ Home ■ Away

Key Games

vs. Troy: The Trojans are likely the biggest hurdle on the home schedule. They used a dominant run game paired with ferocious defense to win a Sun Belt title but the roster took a hit due to graduation, transfers, and a coaching change.

@ Florida State: After a perfect 13-0 start to the season, the Seminoles endured a brutal playoff snub and an even worse bowl loss to Georgia. Memphis will need their very best game.

@ Tulane: Will this Thanksgiving Day matchup decide whether Tulane or Memphis makes it to the American Championship? Will it determine who hosts? Will this game be replayed in nine days? Buckle up.

Player Spotlight

Photo via Daily Memphian



ROC TAYLOR – WR

There have been a lot of star receivers to come through Memphis in the last decade and Taylor is the latest. He burst onto the scene with the Tigers in 2023. After two rather nonchalant seasons in which featured only 24 receptions, Taylor established himself as WR1 for Henigan and he dazzled his way to a 1,000 yard season. His 8 catch, 102 yard performance was instrumental in the Liberty Bowl victory over Iowa State.

2023 Stats: 69 REC, 1083 YDS, 4 TD

Photo via The Commercial Appeal



CHANDLER MARTIN – LB

If an impressive play was made by the Memphis defense last season, it was a safe bet to assume Martin was either directly or indirectly responsible. In just his sophomore season, Martin led his team in tackles, tackles for loss, and sacks and he nabbed an interception against Charlotte, promptly returning the ball 60 yards for a touchdown. That score was pivotal in the Tigers' overtime victory over the 49ers.

2023 Stats: 95 TKL, 17 TFL, 3 SACK, 2 FF, 2 INT

Photo via College Gridirons



Simmons Bank Liberty Stadium (56,862)



**DeMeer
BLANKUMSEE**

SPECIAL TEAMS

Tanner Gillis had an up and down season for Memphis. He made 10 out of 13 field goals and two of those misses were from 40 yards or more but he also missed two extra points (in fairness, Memphis kicked a lot of them last year). **Josh Sloan** could be the punter after transferring from UTEP where he started for four seasons. Running back Sutton Smith proved took a kickoff back 78 yards last season.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Star quarterback? Check. Several significant transfer additions to pair with first- and second-team All-AAC performers from 2023? Check. Is there anything missing? That's what we're about to find out and the schedule provides plenty of intense examinations of this Memphis team. The non-conference schedule features two conference champions, Troy and Florida State. A trip to Tallahassee presents obvious challenges but the Tigers knocked off Ole Miss on their way to a New Year's Six game in 2019 and an upset, although unlikely, wouldn't be unheard of.

If the Tigers want to win the conference, they'll have to be road warriors as they face South Florida, UTSA, and Tulane all away from the friendly confines of Liberty Stadium. It's worth noting that the Tigers went a perfect 5-0 on the road last year. Ironically, this year Memphis has every opportunity to run the table in their seven home games. Henigan has AAC player of the year potential and there a host of weapons and a strong line to compliment him.

Appointment Television



vs.



Sat, Sept 14 - 12:00 PM ET ESPN

Memphis nearly defeated a Missouri team that won 11 games in 2023 and they did eventually beat a Power 5 school Iowa State in the Liberty Bowl. Memphis has aspirations of playoff contention and a win over the Seminoles would be a monumental victory for the program. Ironically, they'll face their former head coach Mike Norvell who guided the program to their best season in school history with 12 wins and an AAC title in '19

2023 Statistics

Offense			Defense		
Statistic	Per Game	FBS Rank	Statistic	Per Game	FBS Rank
Points	39.4	6	Points	28.8	92
Rushing	152.0	75	Rushing	155.2	77
Passing	306.5	10	Passing	268.0	121
Total	458.5	14	Total	423.2	111
Sacks	19	T-31	Sacks	23	T-95

2024 Projection

10-2

1st in AAC



XO



XO



X2

**2014
2019**