



TULANE GREEN WAVE

2023 Record: 11-3

American Athletic Conference

New Orleans, LA

FBS Ranking

49



JESUS MACHADO – LB

Photo via Tulane University Athletics

Willie Fritz has moved on from Tulane to coach the Houston Cougars, but his time spent in New Orleans marked the two best seasons of this program in the 20th century. In this current era of college football, many coaches who leave their school often cripple that program (usually unintentionally), but that doesn't seem to be the case here. For one, Tulane brought in another great head coach hire in Jon Sumrall. While Fritz posted back-to-back double digit win seasons at Tulane, Sumrall put together an identical string of success (minus a New Year's Six birth) with double-digit wins and a conference championship in 2023.

A lot of returning talent remains on this roster and while there will be perhaps some small growing pains in the coaching transition, Tulane is poised for another great season and is understandably considered one of the favorites to win the American after back-to-back appearances in the conference championship game and a title in 2022. The Green Wave have remarkably spent more time ranked in the top 25 in the last two seasons than they have unranked. That stretch may not continue with two difficult non-conference matchups, but only time will tell.

OFFENSE

After registering 9,603 passing yards from 2020 to 2023, Michael Pratt leaves as the school's all-time leading passer and he's decorated the record books in many other areas as well. Replacing him will obviously be a difficult, if not impossible task. The Green Wave may turn to Oregon transfer **Ty Thompson**. He was stuck behind Bo Nix for the majority of his Ducks career and has only 66 total attempts over four seasons with 6 touchdowns and 4 interceptions. Thompson will need to fend off **Kai Horton** for the starting role. Horton started two games when Pratt went down with injury and completed 53.7% percent of his passes for 604 yards, 3 touchdowns, and 2 interceptions. Of the two, Thompson would theoretically be the more skilled runner although neither will likely match Pratt's 286 rushing yards and 5 touchdowns.

Despite losing Tyjae Spears in 2022 (the American Offensive Player of the Year), the Green Wave found a replacement in **Makhi Hughes** who raced for 1,398 yards and 7 touchdowns in his freshman season. No running back in the conference had more yards. With the adjustment at quarterback, Hughes will again be the focal point of the offense. Despite Hughes' success, the ground game as whole was fairly average. Sumrall and offensive coordinator Joe Craddock will need to find talent behind Hughes. **Shaadie Clayton-Johnson** was the second leading running back but he ran for only 150 yards on a less-than-ideal 3.7 yards per carry.

The offensive line may feature three starting seniors including Western Kentucky transfer **Vincent Murphy**. He was a third-team All-Conference USA performer for the Hilltoppers and has started 24 games in his career. **Rashad Green** has him beat with 38 starts and **Josh Remetich** chips in several more. If this group stays healthy, they have the chance to be better than last year. The receiving corps will also look different with the top three pass catchers gone. **Mario Williams** could be a candidate for a breakout season after transferring in from USC.

DEFENSE

The Green Wave have been dominant defensively the past two seasons. Tulane somehow improved their scoring defense from 22.2 to 20.2 in 2022 and 20.5 in 2023 and the top three tacklers return (although the next six tacklers after that are gone). **Jesus Machado** led the way with 98 tackles and fellow linebacker **Tyler Grubbs** finished just behind him with 85 tackles including 3 sacks. **Caleb Ransaw** joins that group, following Sumrall from Troy.

The defensive line made life especially miserable for opposing offenses. Darius Hodges was a constant disrupter in four seasons with the Green Wave and he will obviously be missed after 18.5 career sacks. **Patrick Jenkins** is back and he very well might be the best defensive tackle in the conference. However, without Hodges, the Green Wave will have a hard time replicating last year's 35 sacks, the most since 2020.

The secondary will feature several new faces but it doesn't necessarily mean that unit will take a step back. Transfers will play a key role (and Sumrall brings in one of the top transfer classes in the conference). **Bailey Despanie** made 67 tackles and 5.5 tackles for loss and he'll be joined by **Jalen Geiger** (Kentucky), **Micah Robinson** (Furman) among others.

Can feisty Green Wave keep success rolling in New Orleans?

HC: Jon Sumrall
(1st Year)

OC: Joe Craddock
(1st Year)

DC: Greg Gasparato
(1st Year)

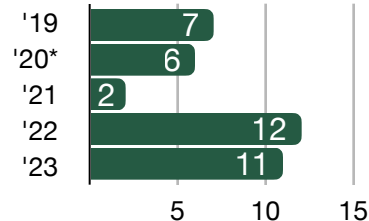
2024 Class Rankings

Recruiting
63

Transfer Portal
47

Via 24/7 Sports

TULANE WIN TREND



2023 Results (11-3)

- South Alabama (W 37-17)
- Mississippi (L 20-37)
- @ Southern Miss (W 21-3)
- Nicholls (W 36-7)
- UAB (W 35-23)
- @ Memphis (W 31-21)
- North Texas (W 35-28)
- @ Rice (W 30-28)
- @ East Carolina (W 13-10)
- Tulsa (W 24-22)
- @ Florida Atlantic (W 24-8)
- UTSA (W 29-16)
- SMU (L 14-26)
- AAC Championship Game
- Virginia Tech (L 20-41)
- Military Bowl

Wk	2024 Tulane Schedule	
1	Thu, Aug 29	vs. SE Louisiana
2	Sat, Sept 7	vs. Kansas State
3	Sat, Sept 14	@ Oklahoma
4	Sat, Sept 21	@ Louisiana
5	Sat, Sept 28	vs. South Florida
6	Sat, Oct 5	@ UAB
8	Sat, Oct 19	vs. Rice
9	Sat, Oct 26	@ North Texas
10	Thu, Oct 31	@ Charlotte
11	Sat, Nov 9	vs. Temple
12	Sat, Nov 16	@ Navy
14	Thu, Nov 28	vs. Memphis

■ Home ■ Away

Key Games

vs. Kansas State: Last year, Ole Miss traveled to Yulman and got everything they wanted against a tough Green Wave team battling without their starting quarterback. Will Kansas State get the same scare?

vs. South Florida: Jon Sumrall's first American Conference game comes against a team that also has aspirations of a championship. Tulane was won three straight in the series.

vs. Memphis: There's a distinct possibility that this Thanksgiving Day showdown pits the top two teams in the conference. At the very least, there will almost certainly be championship implications on the line.

Player Spotlight

Photo via NOLA.com

Photo via FOX 8



MARHI HUGHES – RB

Hughes produced 1,378 rushing yards and what's scary (for opponents) is that he wasn't even the full-time starter until late September. Beginning with the game against UAB, he rattled off six straight performances of 100 yards or more and ended the regular season with a dominant 166-yard game against UTSA to help the Green Wave clinch a spot in the AAC Championship. Oh, and he's only a sophomore. Look out, American.

2023 Stats: 258 RUSH, 1378 YDS, 7 TD



PATRICK JENKINS – DT

It's not often that a team's leading sacker gets the job done at the tackle position, but that's what Jenkins did in 2023. His 5.5 sacks were an improvement from a 33 tackle, 3 sack performance in 2022. Now entering his third year with Tulane after two seasons with TCU, Jenkins is widely known as one of the biggest disrupters of any player in the conference (or the country, for that matter).

2023 Stats: 32 TKL, 11.5 TFL, 5.5 SACK, 1 FF

Photo via Tulane Athletics



Yulman Stadium (30,000)



Alex BAUMAN

SPECIAL TEAMS

Tulane has had a history of great kickers and Valentino Ambrosio fit that bill after hitting 21 of 26 field goals in 2023. He graduates and Tulane will replace him with **Jacob Barnes** who has started for Louisiana Tech for much of the past four seasons. His career long is 51 yards and he connected on 12 of 15 attempts in 2023 including three from 40+. Punter **Will Karoll** returns after a strong season.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Jon Sumroll is hoping Tulane simply picks up where they left off. The Green Wave lost only a single game in the regular season against Mississippi in a game where they extremely competitive even without Michael Pratt (the final score is not an indication of how close that game was). They did lose the last two games of the season against SMU in the American Championship and Virginia Tech in the Military Bowl but it was the first time in a long, storied program history that Tulane won double-digit games in back-to-back seasons.

Can Tulane do it again? Games against Kansas State and Oklahoma are *huge* hurdles in that quest, but the Green Wave do welcome KSU to Yulman and they beat them in Manhattan in 2022 which really kicked off this impressive two year run. A slight drop-off wouldn't be unexpected but another trip to the AAC Championship game is absolutely within their reach, especially if the quarterback transition is more seamless than expected.

Appointment Television



vs.



Sat, Sept 7 - 12:00 PM ET ESPN or ESPN2

In September 2022, Tulane went to Kansas State and pulled off one of the most shocking upsets in college football that season. Knowing what we know now, that game wasn't as big of an upset as it appeared (even though the Wildcats won the Big 12 that season). Tulane has established themselves as a force in college football ever since and they have a unique chance to double down on that incredible 17-10 victory from 2022.

2023 Statistics

Statistic	Offense		Defense	
	Per Game	FBS Rank	Per Game	FBS Rank
Points	26.4	69	Points	20.5 23
Rushing	155.1	68	Rushing	112.7 16
Passing	215.0	77	Passing	228.6 72
Total	370.1	74	Total	341.3 36
Sacks	28	T-60	Sacks	35 T-33

2024 Projection

8-4

2nd in AAC

Trophy Case



XO



XO



X 1

2022