



# NAVY MIDSHIPMEN

2023 Record: 5-7

American Athletic Conference

Annapolis, MD

FBS Ranking

103



**LUKE PIRRIS – LB**

Photo via PressBox

The last time Navy had a streak of four consecutive losing seasons (like the one they currently possess) was 1998 to 2002. Give a lot of credit to Ken Niumatalolo who put together many successful seasons. Last season was the first year under Brian Newberry and he did increase the win total and claimed the most victories since 2019.

That win increase isn't insignificant. College football has exploded with changes in NIL and the transfer portal and service academies like Navy can't take advantage. In addition, rules preventing a certain kind of block critical to the triple option offense were classified as chop blocks (and therefore, a penalty). All that to say, the days of Navy appearing in the top 25 like they did four times in five seasons from 2015 to 2019 may be over (although it's worth noting Air Force did crack the top 25 last season). Still, if Newberry can guide the program forward, no team in the American will want to face the Midshipmen.

## OFFENSE

Navy has been held to 22 points or less per game for the last four seasons. Last year the Midshipmen hit a three-year low in points but part of the challenges came from experimenting on offense. Like their rivals Army, Navy added a passing aspect to their offense in 2023 (the Midshipmen attempted 29 passes in their game against Army, unheard of!). New offensive coordinator Drew Cronic enters and will establish a version of his system that was used at Mercer. His offense could be blended with the more traditional triple option concepts that Navy has employed in the past, the Midshipmen are keeping things as close to the vest as possible.

The results of last year's scheme were mixed but part of the issue was that the quarterback position became a revolving door as the injury bug bit multiple times. Tai Lavatai and Xavier Arline were the two most productive options but both graduated. Enter either **Blake Horvath** or **Braxton Woodson**. Both appeared in brief stints but neither quarterback completed more than 50% of their passes. Horvath was a slightly more dynamic as a runner and he enters his junior season. Horvath may not be asked to pass as much as Navy quarterbacks last year.

Another reason why the offense struggled is because the offensive line wasn't well suited for a drop back passer. That line was quickly exposed in the season opener against Notre Dame even though Navy attempted a season-low 7 passes against the Fighting Irish. The line this year is more experienced with veteran **Connor McMahon** holding down the all-important left tackle position.

**Alex Tecza** was the most effective running back and he finished with 758 yards and 5 touchdowns. **Daba Fofana** chipped in 283 yards. In his two seasons with the Midshipmen, he's never been a high-average back but he runs hard and uses leverage well at the goal line. **Brandon Chatman** and **Amin Hassan** are two other ball carriers to watch.

## DEFENSE

In 2020, the usual stout defense was caught in a very difficult situation. The Midshipmen were not able to practice tackling at all in the spring, and the results were devastating. BYU tore through Navy for 55 points and two weeks later Air Force blew out Navy 40-7. The Midshipmen defense has really only now recovered from that setback. **Colin Ramos** might be the best linebacker in the conference and the defense relies on him to get the action started.

**Luke Pirris** is another quality linebacker who contributed 62 tackles. Both he and end **Justin Reed** tallied 4.5 sacks and **Landon Robinson** added four more. Defensive coordinator P.J. Volker has a lot to work with in this trio plus Ramos and the defensive front could cause some serious problems for opponents.

The secondary brings back both starting cornerbacks and both starting safeties. **Dashaun Peele** and **Rayuan Lane** highlight that group as each had four interceptions. Lane also added 66 tackles, three of those for loss. This unit should be good despite the fact that they don't face the kinds of offenses they will see during the season in practice.

Can Navy find offensive identify and return to AAC prominence?

**HC: Brian Newberry**  
(2nd Year, 5-7)

**OC: Drew Cronic**  
(1st Year)

**DC: P.J. Volker**  
(2nd Year)

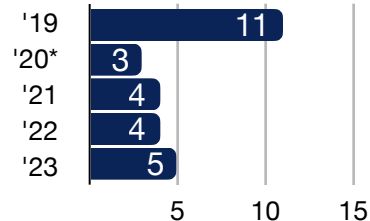
## 2024 Class Rankings

Recruiting  
**153**

Transfer Portal  
**N/A**

Via 24/7 Sports

## NAVY WIN TREND



## 2023 Results (5-7)

vs. Notre Dame (L 3-42)  
**Wagner (W 24-0)**  
@ Memphis (L 24-28)  
South Florida (L 30-44)  
**North Texas (W 27-24)**  
@ **Charlotte (W 14-0)**  
Air Force (L 6-17)  
@ Temple (L 18-32)  
**UAB (W 31-6)**  
**East Carolina (W 10-0)**  
@ SMU (L 14-59)  
vs. Army (L 11-17)



Wk	2024 Navy Schedule	
1	Sat, Aug 31	vs. Bucknell
2	Sat, Sept 7	vs. Temple
4	Sat, Sept 21	vs. Memphis
5	Sat, Sept 28	@ UAB
6	Sat, Oct 5	@ Air Force
8	Sat, Oct 19	vs. Charlotte
9	Sat, Oct 26	vs. Notre Dame*
10	Sat, Nov 2	@ Rice
11	Sat, Nov 29	@ South Florida
12	Sat, Nov 16	vs. Tulane
14	Sat, Nov 30	@ East Carolina
16	Sat, Dec 14	vs. Army*

■ Home ■ Away ■ Neutral

## Key Games

**@ Air Force:** Last year the Midshipmen held a Top 25 Air Force team to just 17 points but they themselves only managed 6 points and a season-low 124 yards. The Falcons have now run their win streak against Navy to four.

**vs. Charlotte:** Once this game is played, Navy will play just one home game in the final eight weeks of the season, so it feels imperative to take advantage in a winnable matchup in Annapolis.

**vs. Army:** Army/Navy is always a must watch, and the two teams will be able to compare themselves even more as they navigate through their respective American conference schedule until they eventually clash in Landover.

# Player Spotlight

Photo via Sports Illustrated



## COLIN RAMOS – LB

Navy has had a history of excellent linebacker play and Colin Ramos certainly fits that billing. He registered team bests in a variety of categories including 110 tackles and six quarterback hurries. He has the respect of his teammates, who voted him as a captain in 2024. He earned first-team All-AAC honors last season and he's a legitimate candidate for the defensive player of the year if he matches or exceeds last season's output.

**2023 Stats: 110 TKL, 9 TFL, 2 SACK, 2 FF**

Photo via Naval Academy Athletics

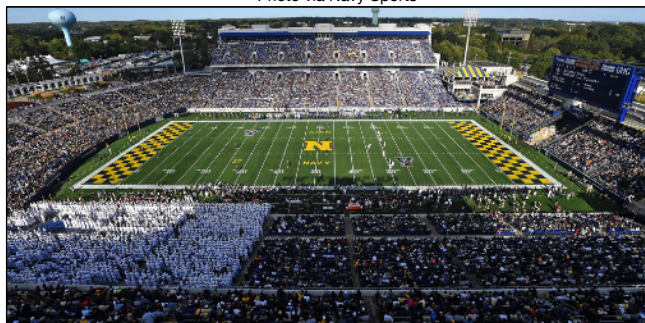


## ALEX TECZA – RB

Tecza had a standout sophomore season that really got started in the matchup against Memphis. The Midshipmen gave the Tigers all they could handle and Tecza's performance was a big reason. After only 11 carries in his first two games of the year, he raced for 163 yards (including a 75-yard sprint) on only 15 carries. He factors into the passing game to and caught 16 of the team's 102 total receptions.

**2023 Stats: 126 RUSH, 758 YDS, 5 TD**

Photo via Navy Sports



**Navy-Marine Corps Memorial Stadium (34,000)**



Photo via Capital Gazette



## Blake HORVATH

### SPECIAL TEAMS

Navy would like to utilize **Riley Riethman** less, but it's reassuring to know that the senior punter can flip the field with ease and he even booted a 68 yard punt last season. Kicker **Nathan Kirkwood** also returns. He attempted only nine field goals last season with a long of 45 yards.

### THE BOTTOM LINE

Can Navy get to a bowl game? The short answer is yes, *if* the offense takes off (relative to 2023) in Cronic's first year, that is. The non-conference schedule is the usual trio of Army, Air Force, and Notre Dame plus an opening week game against an FCS opponent. In the American schedule, Navy opportunistically avoids UTSA and Memphis and they welcome the Tulane Green Wave to Annapolis.

Last year, Navy exceeded expectations and won four conference games. However, their 1-3 non-conference record meant the strong AAC performance wasn't enough for a bowl game. There's a distinct possibility the same result occurs this year and only one home game in the final eight weeks of the season doesn't necessarily help. Even though there have been some down years for the Midshipmen, don't write them off and certainly don't assume they can't pull an upset against a team at the top of the American standings.

## Appointment Television



vs.



**Sat, Dec 14 - 3:00 PM ET CBS**

Welcome to the 145th edition of the famous Army/Navy game. Out of all of the matchups over the years, the two programs have never shared the same conference. Ironically, this matchup is being played as a non-conference game. After a 14-game win streak, Navy has now dropped six of the last eight and the last two losses came by a combined 8 points. A scoop and score doomed the Midshipmen in last year's contest.

### 2023 Statistics

Offense			Defense		
Statistic	Per Game	FBS Rank	Statistic	Per Game	FBS Rank
<b>Points</b>	<b>17.7</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>22.4</b>	<b>T-37</b>
<b>Rushing</b>	<b>194.6</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>Rushing</b>	<b>128.8</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Passing</b>	<b>105.7</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>Passing</b>	<b>224.8</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>300.3</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>353.7</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Sacks</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>T-60</b>	<b>Sacks</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>T-39</b>

## 2024 Projection

**5-7**

**11th in AAC**

## Trophy Case



**XO**



**XO**



**XO**