

JAMES MADISON DUKES

Sun Belt - East Division



JAMES MADISON BIO

National Championships - 0



Sun Belt Championships: 0

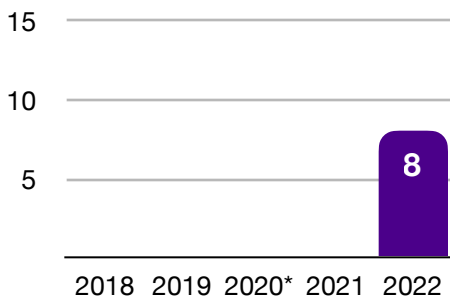
Location: **Harrisonburg, VA**

All-Time Record: **8-3**

2022 Results: **8-3**

Head Coach: **Curt Cignetti**
2nd Year (FBS) - (8-3)

5-YEAR WIN TREND



Bridgeforth Stadium (25,000)

Building on Incredible FBS Debut

You could have hardly scripted a better inaugural season in the FBS than James Madison's debut last season. The Dukes finished near the top of the FCS in each of their last three seasons in the subdivision under head coach Curt Cignetti. A 32-5 record over that time span (and a loss in the FCS Championship Game in 2019) was not a fluke. James Madison opened the season with a perfect 5-0 record and earned a #25 ranking in the AP Poll. In that win streak, the Dukes walloped Middle Tennessee and Norfolk State and then took out Appalachian State who was riding high on an upset win over Texas A&M and a thrilling Hail Mary victory over the eventual Sun Belt champions Troy. The Dukes then came back to earth with three straight losses but finished strong with three wins to close the year including a season finale blowout victory over #23 Coastal Carolina. Unfortunately, the NCAA does not allow teams to compete in a bowl game in their first two seasons in the FBS and the Sun Belt ruled that the Dukes would not be eligible to compete for a Sun Belt conference championship in that same time span. I disagree vehemently with both of these rules but they are in place for this season and James Madison's wavier was denied by the NCAA.

While last season was remarkably successful, the Dukes lose their starting quarterback, best running back, and best receiver on an offense that lit up the scoreboard with 37.0 points per game. James Madison had tremendous balance offensively and averaged over 450 yards per game but it will take a big effort to get back to that kind of production with so many key players gone. Despite losing Cole Johnson, the program's second all-time career passer, heading into the 2022 season, quarterback Todd Centeio had an excellent year and threw for 2,697 yards for 25 touchdowns and just five interceptions. When he went briefly down with injury **Billy Atkins** filled in but he struggled and threw five interceptions in only 43 pass attempts. Centeio's departure leaves a big hole at quarterback and while Atkins is back, the job may go to **Alonza Barnett** or **Jordan McCloud**. McCloud was a spot starter at Arizona and South Florida and certainly brings the most experience to the table which could give him an edge in the quarterback battle. **Brett Griffis** could also be part of the conversation after transferring in from Wake Forest.

Whichever quarterback emerges will need to break in several new weapons as four of the five top receivers are gone including 1,000 yard wideout Kris Thornton. **Reggie Brown** is the only receiver who had more than 20 catches and 200 yards (24 catches, 401 yards, 4 touchdowns). **Elijah Sarratt** had 700 yards as a true freshman at FCS Saint Francis and **Omarion Dollison** had 176 yards with the South Florida Bulls. The Dukes will also be reliant on transfers at tight end but do bring back **Zach Horton** who had 159 yards on 13 catches and a pair of touchdowns. It's understandable if the passing game isn't quite as efficient this season. The running game will miss their top back Percy Agyei-Obese (908 yards) and quarterback Centeio added 393 yards and 7 touchdowns on the ground, too. **Latrell Palmer** rushed for 398 yards and **Kaelon Black** added 333 yards and they should be the two main options at running back this season. **Tyson Lawton** had a 1,000 yard season at Stony Brook in 2021 but had just 33 carries for 88 rushes in 2022. If healthy, he'll add a big lift to the running back room.

The Dukes had allowed less than 20 points per game for five straight seasons before last year but the bump to 20.9 points was no surprise with only four returning starters and a jump up to the FBS. It's defense was remarkable strong in their first season and seven returners are now back in 2023 and this unit could be one of the best in the conference yet again. James Madison was incredibly strong up front and only allowed 79.5 rush yards which was second in the country! With players like **Jamree Kromah**, **James Carpenter**, and **Taurus Jones** back, the front seven should be elite and a couple of transfers only adds to the talent on this side of the ball.













The Bottom Line: It's highly unfortunate that the Dukes don't have a Sun Belt title or a bowl game to play for, but there was no lack of motivation last year and I don't expect that to be an issue in 2023, either. With a more challenging schedule and the absence of key offensive personnel I do expect a slight dip in the win column but the Dukes could easily surpass expectations.

Projection: 6-6 (5th in Sun Belt East)

2022 Statistics

Points Scored 37.0 13th in FBS	Rush Yards 186.7 37th in FBS	Pass Yards 265.7 35th in FBS	Turnover Margin +4 36th in FBS
Points Allowed 20.9 23rd in FBS	Rush YDS Allowed 79.5 2nd in FBS	Pass YDS Allowed 210.0 41st in FBS	

2023 James Madison Schedule

Week	Date	Team
1	Sat, Sept 2	 vs. Bucknell
2	Sat, Sept 9	 @ Virginia
3	Sat, Sept 16	 @ Troy
4	Sat, Sept 23	 @ Utah State
5	Sat, Sept 30	 vs. S. Alabama
6	Bye Week	
7	Sat, Oct 14	 vs. Georgia So.
8	Thu, Oct 19	 @ Marshall
9	Sat, Oct 28	 vs. Old Dominion
10	Sat, Nov 4	 @ Georgia State
11	Sat, Nov 11	 vs. UConn
12	Sat, Nov 18	 vs. App State
13	Sat, Nov 25	 @ Coastal Car

Conference Games in Bold

KEY GAMES

Sat, Oct 14: vs. Georgia Southern - The Eagles finally put an end to James Madison's perfect 5-0 start in the FBS. This game should be a battle of strength on strength as the high-power Georgia Southern offense takes on the strong defense of the Dukes.

Sat, Oct 28: vs. Old Dominion - The "Royal Rivalry" is a recently minted rivalry that pits all of the schools' respective athletic teams against one another. Now that both teams are in the FBS they should meet every season which should heat up the intensity.

Sat, Nov 25: @ Coastal Carolina - The Dukes waxed the Chants 47-7 in what a game that would have otherwise been a Sun Belt East title game last year.

KEY PLAYERS

James Carpenter - DT



The defensive line was rock solid for the Dukes last season and Carpenter was the most productive player. He had 52 tackles and 5.5 sacks for a total of 12 tackles for loss on the season. He's a disruptive force and was one of three players on the front seven to be named to the All-SBC second team. If he produces like he did last season, he'll wind up on the first team and the Dukes will be better for it.

Taurus Jones - LB

Jones made a big impact all over the field for the Dukes last season. His 82 tackles led James Madison by a healthy margin and he was especially valuable in stopping the run and contributed 10.5 tackles for loss. He forced a fumble, recovered two fumbles, and picked off a pass against Texas State and deflected three other passes. James Madison has had a history of strong defenses over the last decade and Jones and company will ensure it stays that way in 2023.



2022 RESULTS (8-3)

Middle Tennessee (W 44-7)
Norfolk State (W 63-7)
@ App State (W 32-28)
Texas State (W 40-13)
@ Arkansas State (W 42-20)
 @ Georgia Southern (L 38-45)
 Marshall (L 12-26)
 @ Louisville (L 10-34)
@ Old Dominion (W 37-3)
Georgia State (W 42-40)
Coastal Carolina (W 47-7)

**JAMES
MADISON**

RECRUITING

2023 Class Ranking

148th

(Via 24/7 Sports)