

Warner University vs Stetson: FB Preview

September 3, 2021|NAIA Football



September 3, 2021 - Deland, FL -

This Saturday, the Stetson Hatters, a NCAA DI FCS team faces off against the Warner University Royals, a member of the NAIA. Both teams come in to the 2021 season looking to improve on their previous records and show that their records from the 2020 and 2021 shortened seasons was a fluke. Stetson went 0-4 this past spring with Coach Brian Young at the helm. Stetson University begins the fall 2021 season with a new offensive coordinator Darrell Eyman and third year defensive coordinator Steve Davis. Warner recorded a 2-4 record in 2020 with coach Kirk Talley. The teams will meet in Deland, Florida at Spec Martin Memorial Stadium. Kickoff for the game is set for 6 p.m. with live broadcast coverage on ESPN+.

Coach Brian Young is entering his 9th season as a coach for Stetson but his first as a head coach. Young previously worked as an assistant coach for Stetson, as defensive coordinator and worked with the special team's unit. Coach Young's team begins the season unranked in the NCAA Preseason poll and is projected to finish towards the bottom of the Pioneer League. The football program averaged 11.75 points and 296.5 yards per game in spring 2021 FCS play.

Stetson's roster is filled with returning depth and experience, especially on the defensive side of the ball. Although only one player, defensive lineman Fermon Reid; made the 2021 Preseason All-Pioneer Football League list, the defensive backfield

returns solid veterans like 2021 honorable mention candidates Rassie Littlejohn and Jaylon Johnson. On the offensive side of the ball, The Hatters return Pioneer League Preseason All Football league offensive lineman Antonio Derry who will be protecting team captain and returning starting QB Alex Piccirilli.

Warner University begins their fall campaign as the 77th ranked team in NAIA Division 2 football. Under second year Coach Kirk Talley, Warner's offense averaged 16.5 points per game in 2020. Warner's defense ranked 11th in opponent 4th down conversions and 37th in pass defense per game. The Royal's special team's unit was strong in 2020 as they finished 1st in field goals made. Kicker Santiago Tovar ranked number 1 in field goal percentage.

Coach Talley's team begins the season with three players named to the All-Mid-South Conference Sun division first team. Offensive lineman Tanner Sims and Jonas Small highlight the list for Warner along with senior running back Javon Wilson.

Stetson enters Saturday's game as a favorite because of their FCS Division 1 status, strength of past opponents and player experience. If Stetson wants to start their season off with a bang, they must play like they are the better team and not take Warner lightly. Upsets are common in the game of football and the underdog can win games. Coach Young will have to adapt to any challenges the team faces and prepare for a strong defensive effort from a determined Warner team. On Saturday, Warner University will need to rely on their defense and strong special teams' unit to beat Stetson and prove they can beat a FCS division 1 team.