

Hot Start for St. Thomas Football

October 20, 2021 | NAIA Football

By Jorden Hampton



October 20, 2021 - Miami Gardens, FL -

The St. Thomas Bobcats have started the season on a hot streak which has guided them to a 7-0 record. Led by head coach Bill Rychel, St. Thomas has vastly improved from previous seasons. The Bobcats didn't make the playoffs in the last 2 years and were an average football team at best. In 2019 and 2020, they went 2-4 in conference competition and finished below 500. Coach Rychel's team is currently ranked 24th in the top 25 NAIA football rankings. The Bobcats are currently ranked 4th in the pioneer league. St. Thomas is a team on the rise with big expectations this season.

St. Thomas's most impressive victory came against St. Andrews University where they won 62-20. In the game quarterback Tyler Thomas completed 15 passes, threw for 364 yards, and threw 3 touchdown passes. The Bobcats scored 4 rushing touchdowns and played complementary football. Coach Rychel's team continued their success by defeating Fort Lauderdale 58-0 in which Tyler Thomas threw 2 touchdowns and the bobcats played well on offense, defense, and special teams.

St. Thomas is firing on all cylinders when it comes to offense and defense. The Bobcats offense is scoring 44.2 points per game and averaging 271.7 passing yards. A high scoring offense has helped St. Thomas establish their dominance and get leads they can hold on to. Continued improvement on offense will help the Bobcats win the rest of

their games this season. Defensively, the Bobcats are allowing 14 points per game and have 5 interceptions this season. The defense is helping the offense by giving the Bobcats multiple chances to score.

St. Thomas has had success against unranked opponents and have proven they can compete the first seven weeks of the season. St. Thomas will be tested when they face Keiser University on November 6th. Keiser is currently ranked 6th in the NAIA top 25 poll and have a 4-2 record. Their losses have been to 6-0 Lindsey Wilson and Southeastern University, a team St. Thomas plays a week before their match with Keiser. If St. Thomas can stay perfect until their show down on November 6th, they have to feel good about scoring 44 points against Keiser who is only averaging 24 points a game.

St. Thomas is enjoying a resurgent year and are playing more like a top 10 team than a top 25 football team. At this point, the Bobcats season can only be considered a success if they make the playoffs. Coach Rychel's team will have to be consistent in their weekly approach and prepare for physical football games down the stretch. With St. Thomas being undefeated, they have a target on their backs despite the NAIA rankings. Rychel's team will have to take every game seriously and respect all opponents. If St. Thomas stays focused and can find a way to defeat Southeastern and Keiser the sky is the limit for one of the most surprising teams in the NAIA this season.