

2006 PREVIEW

PITT FOOTBALL 2006



2006 PREVIEW

THE OFFENSE

QUARTERBACKS

WHO'S BACK: Senior **Tyler Palko** returns for his third season as Pitt's starting quarterback. A two-time second-team All-Big East selection, Palko threw for 2,392 yards while completing 56.6% of his passes (193 of 341) last year. He threw 17 touchdowns against nine interceptions. Palko enters his final season ranked fifth all-time at Pitt with 5,472 passing yards. Owing both skills and smarts, he could emerge as a national honors candidate in 2006.

Tyler Palko



Sophomore **Bill Stull** was Palko's chief backup last year as a true freshman. He made two appearances in late-game situations and threw two passes, completing one for 17 yards. Also returning is fifth-year senior walk-on **Matt Flaus**.

WHO'S NEW: Pitt signed two freshmen quarterbacks in **Dexter Davidson** and **Kevan Smith**. Davidson was a two-time All-Florida performer at North Broward Prep and finished his career as the most prolific passer in Broward County history with 6,011 yards and 78 touchdowns. Smith, a strong-armed prospect from nearby Cranberry Township, played in only 12 games his final two years due to a wrist injury. He still threw for over 2,100 yards during that span at Seneca Valley High and also was one of Western Pennsylvania's top baseball prospects. Additionally, the Panthers will gain the services of freshman walk-on **Steve Malinchak**, who threw 40 career TD passes at Scranton Prep (Pa.).

NOTABLE: Palko has started all 23 games for Pitt the last two years. He has thrown 41 touchdowns against just 16 interceptions during that time.

QUOTABLE: "Tyler's committing to preparation and winning is unparalleled," said offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach Matt Cavanaugh, himself an All-America quarterback at Pitt in 1977. "As a senior leader and quarterback, he will be a major catalyst for our team. Although Bill Stull saw only limited action last year, that experience should help him as our backup this season. We're excited to see what our freshmen can do in training camp."

RUNNING BACKS

WHO'S BACK: Tailback **LaRod Stephens-Howling** led Pitt in rushing as a true freshman, compiling 434 yards and averaging 4.5 per carry in nine games. His strongest outings were against Syracuse (101), Nebraska (98 yards) and South Florida (91). Despite a midseason ankle injury that forced him out of the lineup for a pair of games, Stephens-Howling left a strong impression with his speedy and elusive running style. Competition will come from sophomore **Brandon Mason** and redshirt freshman **Shane Brooks**. A pair of walk-ons, junior **John Pettiford** and senior **Kelvin Drewery**, are also in the tailback mix.

Pitt's top three fullbacks last year were all seniors. The outlook at this position is decidedly greener in 2006 with sophomore **Conredge Collins** being the only experienced returnee. Initially slated for a redshirt, Collins moved into active duty in midseason when injuries struck and played in five games. He will be pushed by junior **Mark Yezovich** and redshirt freshman walk-on **Chris Bova**.

WHO'S NEW: **Kevin Collier** ranks as one of the most highly regarded running back recruits in the country. The *PrepStar* All-American averaged 215 yards rushing per game as a senior at New York's Churchville-Chili High. He finished his career with 5,402 yards and should provide instant competition at tailback.

NOTABLE: Two true frosh who played in Pitt's backfield last year compiled some impressive high school stats. LaRod Stephens-Howling rushed for 4,597 yards and 57 TDs while at Pennsylvania's Greater Johnstown High, while Conredge Collins ran for 4,331 yards and 52 TDs at Monsignor Edward Pace in Miami, Fla.

QUOTABLE: "We're an inexperienced group in terms of playing time and an unproven group in terms of production on the field," running backs coach David Walker said. "But we do have a group of backs that is energetic, tough and smart. Those are the qualities that will help us compensate for a lack of experience and make us productive this year."

WIDE RECEIVERS

WHO'S BACK: Pitt's top returning wideout is junior flanker **Derek Kinder**, who had 37 receptions for 374 yards (10.1 avg.) and three touchdowns playing opposite departed All-Big East receiver Greg Lee last year. Kinder emerged as a starter early in the season and became a dependable playmaker. Pushing Kinder at the flanker spot will be senior **Joe DeSardo**, a battle-tested player who has 64 catches for 729 yards (11.4 avg.) and four TDs over the last two seasons. Sophomore walk-on **Austin Ransom** will provide depth.

The competition at split end during the spring revolved around three players: sophomore **Marcel Pestano** and redshirt freshmen **Cedric McGee** and **Oderick Turner**. Pestano gained reps last year in multiple-receiver sets and will look to seize a bigger role this season. McGee and Turner both displayed intriguing potential coming off their redshirt seasons. Senior walk-on **Branden Ballard**, a special teams letterman, will also be in the split end mix.

WHO'S NEW: Pitt will get an infusion of four highly regarded freshmen receivers for fall training camp, including three from Western Pennsylvania and one from the talent-rich state of Florida.

Keystone State products joining the Panthers are **Dorin Dickerson**, **Elijah Fields** and **Aaron Smith**. Dickerson, considered a national Top 100 recruit by the scouting services, was the state Class AAA Player of the Year for West Allegheny High. Fields was the Class A Player of the Year and the first 1,000-yard receiver in Duquesne High history. Smith, a first-team all-state honoree at the Class AAAA level, was a dual-threat quarterback for Gateway High and compiled more than 2,200 all-purpose yards as a senior.



John Simonitis enters his fourth year as a starter.

Florida import **T.J. Porter** was an accomplished two-way player at Pahokee High, earning first team all-state as a utility player.

NOTABLE: Three Pitt underclassmen wide receivers have declared early for the NFL Draft over the last five years, including Antonio Bryant in 2002, Larry Fitzgerald in 2004 and Greg Lee in 2006. Lee bypassed his senior season after leading the Big East in receiving yards per game each of the prior two years, averaging 87.5 last season and 108.1 in 2004.

QUOTABLE: “We have a very young group,” receivers coach Aubrey Hill said. “It is in direct contrast to last year when we had two upperclassmen returning as starters. But this year’s group has proven that they are willing to work hard to get better. They are dedicated to getting better every day to help our team play winning football.”

TIGHT ENDS

WHO’S BACK: Senior **Steve Buches** has been a major player at tight end the last two seasons. He earned six starting assignments last year alongside full-time starter Erik Gill, who graduated. Buches was Pitt’s fourth-leading pass catcher with 17 receptions for 168 yards and two touchdowns. Junior **Darrell Strong** made the transition from wideout to tight end last year and displayed flashes of big-play potential in the passing game. Strong caught 16 passes for 226

yards with one TD and also had a pair of 2-point conversion catches. Sophomore **John Pelusi** lettered as a reserve during his true freshman season. Pelusi missed the spring due to an offseason knee injury and hopes to be back for fall training camp. Also competing at tight end is redshirt freshman walk-on **Dustin Walters**.

WHO’S NEW: Considered the nation’s top tight end by Scout.com, **Nate Byham** joins Pitt after a highly decorated high school career. The Top 100 recruit compiled 86 catches for 1,544 yards with 17 touchdowns to finish as the most prolific receiver in Franklin (Pa.) High history.

NOTABLE: Pitt’s three primary tight ends – Gill, Buches and Strong – accounted for 54 catches for 638 yards last year.

QUOTABLE: “Steve Buches is a natural leader,” said assistant Brian Angelichio, who oversees the tight ends. “He’s played a lot of football here and will be an asset as a blocker and pass catcher. With Darrell Strong’s development, we’re looking to have two quality tight ends on the field together a lot of the time. We’re hopeful John Pelusi’s rehabilitation goes well and we can get him back for the fall. As a positional group, we’re fortunate to have quality kids who are hard workers.”

OFFENSIVE LINE

WHO’S BACK: Pitt returns four starters on the offensive front – sophomore left guard **C.J. Davis**, senior center **Joe Villani**, senior right guard **John Simonitis** and junior right tackle **Mike McGlynn**. Simonitis is the elder statesman with three years of starting experience. McGlynn is a two-year starter, while Villani and Davis are coming off their first seasons in starting roles.

Another returning veteran is junior **Chris Vangas**, who lettered the last two seasons as the backup center and will look to push Villani.

The lone vacancy on the offensive line is at left tackle, where Houston Texans draft pick Charles Spencer was an All-Big East performer last year. Candidates to fill that void include sophomore letterman **John Bachman**, sophomore walk-on **Frank Kochin** and freshman **Kevin Hughes**, a mid-year enrollee who “grayshirted” in 2005.

Competing behind McGlynn at right tackle are sophomore **Chase Clowser**, who lettered on special teams last year, and junior walk-on **Kevin Cimador**, a transfer from New Mexico State.

Providing depth at left guard will be redshirt freshman **John Brown** and sophomore **Dave Weber**. Weber will be looking to get back to active duty after missing the spring due to knee surgery.

Sophomore **Dominic Williams** will provide experienced competition at right guard. He played in 10 games last year with two starts. Also vying for time at right guard will be converted defensive lineman **Derrell Jones**, who redshirted as a true freshman last season.

Junior **Mike DeLuca**, a versatile player who worked at guard and tackle the last two seasons, moved to center during spring drills and is expected to provide competition and depth at that position.

WHO’S NEW: Three new offensive linemen will join Pitt for fall training camp. Junior-college transfer **Jeff Otah** will look to compete at the vacant left tackle position. The 6-foot-6, 340-pound Otah comes in as a seasoned player after starting for two years at Valley Forge Military Academy (Pa.). Freshmen joining the mix include **Scott Corson** out of Greater Johnstown (Pa.) High and **Joe Thomas** from Ohio’s St. Edward High. Both were among the most coveted linemen in the tri-state area this past year.

NOTABLE: Senior guard John Simonitis has made 30 starts over the last three seasons, the most of any player on Pitt’s 2006 roster.

QUOTABLE: “We have a solid foundation with four returning starters,” offensive line coach Paul Dunn said. “Our depth, however, is relatively young and not as experienced. It will be important for both our veterans and young players to keep striving for improvement. As a unit we made progress throughout last year and we want to maintain and build upon that development this season.”

2006 PREVIEW



H.B. Blades (center) will once again lead Pitt's defensive charge.

THE DEFENSE

DEFENSIVE LINE

WHO'S BACK: Pitt will need to retool its interior defensive front, where both tackles were lost to graduation.

At nose tackle, the competition will revolve around three players: sophomore **Corey Davis**, senior **Vernon Botts** and redshirt freshman **Craig Bokor**. Davis lettered last year as a reserve, while Botts is moving inside after being a chief backup at end. Bokor enters his first active season after redshirting during the 2005 campaign.

At defensive tackle, sophomore **Rashaad Duncan** appears ready to gain a full-time starting role. Duncan enjoyed a productive true frosh campaign, playing in all 11 games and making two starts. He will be pushed by sophomore **Gus Mustakas**, a letterman at end as a true frosh last year, and redshirt freshman **Ernest "Mick" Williams**, a converted linebacker who made strong impressions during spring drills. Sophomore **Nick Williams** is recovering from an off-season leg injury.

Pitt welcomes back both starting defensive ends in senior **Charles Sallet** and junior **Chris McKillop**. McKillop led the team with 3.5 sacks and 6.5 tackles for losses. Sallet was second on the team with 5.5 TFLs.

Junior **Joe Clermond**, a two-year letterman, is slated to backup Sallet. On the other side, redshirt freshman **Doug Fulmer** will serve as McKillop's understudy.

WHO'S NEW: Dave Wannstedt made the defensive front a recruiting priority this past year. The result was the addition of six freshman defensive linemen. The Panthers welcome three Pennsylvania products who earned first team all-state last year, including **John Malecki**, **Jason Pinkston** and **Tyler Tkach**. Pitt lured **McKenzie Mathews** out of New York. Mathews had an impressive 39 sacks his final two seasons. Also part of this year's recruiting class were Florida natives **Jared Martin** and **Greg Romeus**.

NOTABLE: Pitt's seven returning defensive tackles have a combined five starting assignments between them. Rashaad Duncan made two starts last year, while Corey Davis made one. Vernon Botts, who enters his first season at defensive tackle, made two starts at defensive end in 2005.

QUOTABLE: "Defending the run is a huge priority for us, especially on the interior defensive front," coach Greg Gattuso said. "We're young but I believe we improved during the offseason. We are focused on continuing that improvement into the season and establishing ourselves as a strength for this team." Added coach Charlie Partridge: "We need our ends to produce more and we believe we have the capability to do that. McKillop and Sallet are two tested players who have both made encouraging strides. They are going to be pushed by young but talented players."

LINEBACKERS

WHO'S BACK: Pitt returns one of the nation's most productive middle linebackers in **H.B. Blades**. A two-time first-team All-Big East selection, Blades has his sights set on All-America honors as a senior this year. Last season he led all Big East defenders with 121 tackles and ranked 13th nationally with 11 stops per game. Providing depth behind Blades are sophomore **Scott McKillop**, who lettered as the chief backup last year, and redshirt freshman **Steve Dell**.

Senior **Clint Session** will be the lead candidate to start at Sam linebacker. One of the defense's most experienced players, Session battled injuries for most of 2005 before earning a pair of starts at the end of the season. Strong competition will come from junior **Derron Thomas**, who started nine games at Sam last year and was the team's fourth-leading tackler with 45 stops. Thomas could also see time at Will linebacker this year.

Sophomore lettermen **Adam Gunn** and **Tyler Tipton** will compete for a chief backup role at the Sam. Both saw most of their time on special teams in 2005.

Senior Will linebacker **Brian Bennett** was on the shelf this spring due to his recovery from a 2005 knee injury. A three-year letterman, he is expected to be fully recovered for fall camp and vie for a major role. During Bennett's absence from spring drills, sophomore **Tommie Campbell** made a successful transition from safety to Will. Although he is new to the position, Campbell's outstanding speed can give Pitt an athletic playmaker on the perimeter.

WHO'S NEW: Three freshman linebackers with Western Pennsylvania roots will join Pitt this fall, including **Dan Loheyde** (Gateway), **Nate Nix** (Thomas Jefferson) and **Greg Webster** (Woodland Hills). Nix and Webster were all-state honorees as seniors, while Loheyde earned All-WPIAL accolades.

NOTABLE: H.B. Blades is striving to become the first three-time first-team All-Big East honoree in Pitt history. The senior was a first-team pick in both 2004 and '05.

QUOTABLE: "We have four veteran guys who own a great deal of starting experience and have made a lot of plays at Pitt," linebackers coach Curtis Bray said. "Blades, Session, Thomas and Bennett form our foundation and they know they will have to set the pace for our younger players."

DEFENSIVE BACKS

WHO'S BACK: Pitt's secondary boasts one of college football's rising stars in junior cornerback **Darrelle Revis**. The first-team All-Big East pick excelled in pass coverage, run support and as a punt returner last year. Revis led Pitt with four interceptions and was second with 13 total passes defended. He also blocked a kick. Owing an impressive package of size, speed and production, he figures to gain a high national profile this year.

Revis will man the left corner position. The right cornerback spot was vacated by two-time All-Big East honoree Bernard "Josh" Lay, a New Orleans Saints draft selection. Battling for the starting nod at right corner will be senior **Reggie Carter** and junior **Kennard Cox**. Carter and Cox have lettered as reserves each of the last two seasons.

Freshman **Jovani Chappel** joined Pitt in January as an early college enrollee. A 2005 all-state performer at Ohio's Trotwood-Madison High, Chappel impressed during the spring and will look to earn the chief backup job behind Revis at left corner. Sophomore **Kelvin Chandler**, a converted receiver, will look to do the same at right cornerback.

Looking to provide depth at the corners will be a pair of walk-ons, sophomore **Julius Eggleston** and redshirt freshman **Mike Toerper**.

Senior **Sam Bryant** returns as the starter at strong safety. Bryant has played in 35 games the last three seasons and will be counted on for veteran leadership and production. Vying for time at the strong will be junior **Jemeel Brady**, a regular in the secondary the last two seasons, and redshirt freshman **Shane Murray**. Redshirt frosh walk-on **Brian Kaiser** will provide depth.

Pitt will need to fill the free safety position vacated by departed four-year starter Tez Morris. The leading candidate will be junior **Mike Phillips**. Phillips started at strong safety the opening three games of last year until an ankle fracture ended his season. After sitting out the spring he is expected to be fully recovered for fall camp. Sophomore letterman **Eric Thatcher**, who has worked at both safety spots during his career, will provide depth at the free this season. Also vying for time is converted running back **Irvan Brown**, who redshirted as a true freshman last year.

A pair of walk-ons, redshirt freshman **Ross Ventrone** and sophomore **Shawn Besong**, will also be in the free safety mix.

WHO'S NEW: In addition to Jovani Chappel, Pitt will welcome three other prospects in the secondary for fall training camp. Freshman **Aaron Berry** ranked as one of the fastest players in Pennsylvania last year as an all-state defensive back at Bishop McDevitt, while fellow frosh **Ricky Gary** was a first team All-Florida selection at Pahokee High. Additionally, junior-college All-American **Lowell Robinson** joins the Panthers after leading the JUCO ranks with three interceptions returned for touchdowns during the 2005 season.

NOTABLE: Pitt ranked second nationally and tops in the Big East in pass defense, yielding just 152.8 yards per game through the air.

QUOTABLE: "I'm pleased with the amount of experience we have coming back in the secondary even though we graduated two starters and potential NFL players," defensive coordinator and secondary coach Paul Rhoads said. "Both Sam Bryant and Mike

Phillips give us veteran leadership and playing time at the safety position and Darrelle Revis has established himself as one of the best defensive backs in the country.

"When you add to that mix a group of guys who have contributed to our special teams, you have an outfit that understands what it takes to win at this level."

SPECIALISTS

WHO'S BACK: Senior punter **Adam Graessle** returns after ranking second in the Big East last year with a 42.2-yard average. A 2004 All-Big East selection, Graessle has displayed All-America potential during his career and should be a vital weapon in the field position battle this year.

The Panthers will be looking for a new placekicker with the departure of Josh Cummings, a two-time All-Big East performer who accounted for 150 points the last two years. Senior **David Abdul** was a strong candidate to succeed Cummings until a recently diagnosed heart condition put his 2006 season into question.

With the potential absence of Abdul, sophomore **Conor Lee** becomes the lead candidate for the placekicking duties. Although he lacks game experience, Lee distinguished himself during the spring with his accuracy and leg strength. Other returning players who gained kicking reps during the spring and could

figure in the mix this year are sophomore **Cody Sawhill** and redshirt freshman **Lucas Stone**.

The kicking game will get a boost from the return of sophomore long snapper **Mark Estermyer**, who handled the punt snapping duties in all 11 games last year. Junior offensive tackle **Mike McGlynn** has handled long snaps for field goals and extra points each of the last two years.

WHO'S NEW: Freshman walk-on **Dan Hutchins** was an All-Pennsylvania specialist the last two years and will compete at placekicker for Pitt. Junior **Dave Brytus** joined the Panthers in January after transferring from Purdue. Brytus, who was one of the Big Ten's most productive punters in 2004 and '05, will have to sit out this season under NCAA guidelines.

NOTABLE: Pitt had four returns for touchdowns in the kicking game last year, including two kickoffs, a punt and a blocked field goal. The last time the Panthers returned both a kickoff and punt for a TD in the same season was 1977.

QUOTABLE: "In Adam Graessle we have a player who has been All-Big East and can achieve that again, and more, this year," special teams coordinator Charlie Partridge said. "He has always had a tremendous leg but has improved himself by focusing on his technique and punting fundamentals.

"Conor Lee showed us some good things during spring drills. He nailed a 49-yard field goal on the last play of the Blue-Gold Game and that's what you're looking for from your placekicker."



Pitt punter Adam Graessle has All-America potential.

PRESEASON DEPTH CHART

THE FOLLOWING IS PITT'S DEPTH CHART HEADING INTO 2006 FALL TRAINING CAMP. NAMES IN BOLD CAPS DENOTE RETURNING STARTERS. MEMBERS OF THE PANTHERS' INCOMING RECRUITING CLASS ARE NOT INCLUDED. AN ASTERISK AFTER PLAYERS' CLASS DENOTES REDSHIRT SEASON.

OFFENSE

SPLIT END

87 Marcel Pestano* (6-1, 190, SO*) or
1 Cedric McGee (6-1, 190, FR*) or
88 Oderick Turner (6-3, 200, FR*)
26 Branden Ballard* (6-2, 210, SR*)

LEFT TACKLE

62 John Bachman* (6-4, 280, SO)
69 Frank Kochin (6-4, 280, SO*)
63 Kevin Hughes (6-4, 300, FR)

LEFT GUARD

55 C.J. DAVIS* (6-2, 300, SO)
78 John Brown (6-4, 285, FR*)
71 Dave Weber (6-3, 305, SO*)

CENTER

68 JOE VILLANI (6-4, 300, SR*)**
64 Chris Vangas** (6-2, 295, SO*)
67 Mike DeLuca (6-3, 285, JR*)

RIGHT GUARD

60 JOHN SIMONITIS* (6-5, 315, SR*)**
70 Dominic Williams* (6-4, 300, SO*)
53 Derrell Jones (6-2, 320, FR*)

RIGHT TACKLE

75 MIKE McGLYNN (6-5, 315, JR*)**
72 Chase Clowser* (6-7, 330, SO*)
57 Kevin Cimador (6-5, 320, JR*)

TIGHT END

84 Steve Buches*** (6-4, 255, SR*)
14 Darrell Strong** (6-5, 260, JR)
83 John Pelusi* (6-3, 250, SO)
45 Dustin Walters (6-2, 230, FR*)

QUARTERBACK

3 TYLER PALKO* (6-2, 220, SR*)**
11 Bill Stull (6-3, 185, SO)
28 Matt Flaus (6-2, 190, SR*)

FULLBACK

31 Conredge Collins* (6-0, 235, SO)
32 Mark Yezovich (6-0, 240, JR*)
6 Chris Bova (5-11, 240, FR*)

TAILBACK

34 LaRod Stephens-Howling* (5-7, 175, SO)
27 Brandon Mason* (6-1, 220, SO*)
26 Shane Brooks (5-11, 220, FR*)
41 John Pettiford (5-11, 200, JR*)
23 Kelvin Drewery (5-10, 190, SR*)

FLANKER

81 DEREK KINDER (6-1, 205, JR)**
4 Joe DeSardo*** (5-8, 195, SR)
18 Austin Ransom (5-11, 195, SO*)

DEFENSE

LEFT END

54 CHARLES SALLET* (6-0, 240, SR*)**
58 Joe Clermond** (6-3, 260, JR*)

NOSE TACKLE

97 Corey Davis* (6-2, 290, SO*)
98 Vernon Botts** (6-4, 260, SR*)
90 Craig Bokor (6-3, 290, FR*)

DEFENSIVE TACKLE

50 Rashaad Duncan* (6-2, 290, SO)
93 Gus Mustakas* (6-3, 265, SO)
95 Ernest "Mick" Williams (6-1, 290, FR*)
47 Nick Williams* (6-2, 275, SO*)

RIGHT END

41 CHRIS McKILLOP (6-3, 250, JR*)**
48 Doug Fulmer (6-4, 240, FR*)

SAM LINEBACKER

17 Clint Session*** (6-0, 235, SR)
39 DERRON THOMAS (6-1, 235, JR*)**
8 Adam Gunn* (6-2, 225, SO*) or
30 Tyler Tipton* (6-2, 240, SO*)

MIDDLE LINEBACKER

51 H.B. BLADES* (6-0, 240, SR)**
40 Scott McKillop* (6-2, 245, SO*)
6 Steve Dell (6-1, 230, FR*)

WILL LINEBACKER

44 Brian Bennett*** (6-0, 235, SR*)
29 Tommie Campbell* (6-3, 210, SO)

LEFT CORNERBACK

25 DARRELLE REVIS (6-0, 200, JR)**
7 Jovani Chappel (5-9, 185, FR)
16 Julius Eggleston (6-2, 190, SO*)

FREE SAFETY

10 Mike Phillips* (5-11, 200, JR*)
28 Eric Thatcher* (5-9, 190, SO*)
20 Irvan Brown (6-0, 190, FR*)
4 Ross Ventrone (5-9, 170, FR*)
11 Shawn Besong (5-11, 200, SO*)

STRONG SAFETY

46 SAM BRYANT* (6-0, 220, SR*)**
24 Jemeel Brady** (6-0, 205, JR*) or
15 Shane Murray (6-1, 210, FR*)
32 Brian Kaiser (6-0, 200, FR*)

RIGHT CORNERBACK

21 Reggie Carter** (6-0, 195, SR*) or
5 Kennard Cox** (6-1, 195, JR*)
19 Kelvin Chandler* (6-2, 185, SO*)
3 Michael Toerper (6-1, 180, FR*)

SPECIALISTS

PUNTER

18 ADAM GRAESSLE* (6-4, 225, SR)**
23 Lucas Stone (6-1, 190, FR*)

PLACEKICKER

16 David Abdul** (5-10, 200, SR*) or
37 Conor Lee (5-11, 195, SO*)
18 Adam Graessle*** (6-4, 225, SR) or
23 Lucas Stone (6-1, 190, FR*)

HOLDER

18 ADAM GRAESSLE* (6-4, 225, SR)**
23 Lucas Stone (6-1, 190, FR*)

LONG SNAPPER

PUNT:

59 MARK ESTERMYER* (6-2, 240, SO*)
84 Steve Buches*** (6-4, 255, SR*)

FIELD GOALS/PATs:

75 MIKE McGLYNN (6-5, 315, JR*)**
59 Mark Estermyer* (6-2, 240, SO*)

PUNT RETURNER

25 DARRELLE REVIS (6-0, 200, JR)**

KICKOFF RETURNER

34 LaRod Stephens-Howling* (5-7, 175, SO) and
87 Marcel Pestano* (6-1, 190, SO*)

PERSONNEL

RETURNING PERSONNEL

OFFENSE (20)

Wide Receiver (5): DEREK KINDER**, Joe DelSardo***, Branden Ballard*, Kelvin Chandler*, Marcel Pestano*

Tackle (3): MIKE McGLYNN**, John Bachman*, Chase Clowser*

Guard (3): JOHN SIMONITIS***, C.J. DAVIS*, Dominic Williams*

Center (2): JOE VILLANI**, Chris Vangas**

Tight End (3): Steve Buches***, Darrell Strong**, John Pelusi*

Quarterback (1): TYLER PALKO***

Tailback (2): Brandon Mason*, LaRod Stephens-Howling*

Fullback (1): Conredge Collins*

DEFENSE (23)

End (5): CHARLES SALLET***, CHRIS McKILLOP**, Vernon Botts**, Joe Clermond**, Gus Mustakas*

Tackle (3): Corey Davis*, Rashaad Duncan*, Nick Williams*

Linebacker (7): H.B. BLADES***, DERRON THOMAS**, Brian Bennett***, Clint Session***, Adam Gunn*, Scott McKillop*, Tyler Tipton*

Strong Safety (4): SAM BRYANT***, Tommie Campbell*, Mike Phillips*, Eric Thatcher*

Free Safety (1): Jemeel Brady**

Cornerback (3): DARRELLE REVIS**, Reggie Carter**, Kennard Cox**

SPECIALISTS (3)

Kicker (1): David Abdul**

Punter (1): ADAM GRAESSELE***

Long Snapper (1): Mark Estermyer*

PERSONNEL LOST

OFFENSE (14)

Wide Receiver (3): GREG LEE***, Terrell Allen**, Larry Moore*

Tackle (3): CHARLES SPENCER****, Dale Williams****, Neal Tracey*

Guard (0):

Center (1): Eric Fritz*

Tight End (1): ERIK GILL****

Quarterback (0):

Tailback (3): RAYMOND KIRKLEY****, Rashad Jennings*, Marcus Furman****

Fullback (3): TIM MURPHY****, Justin Acierno****, Kellen Campbell**

DEFENSE (8)

End (0):

Tackle (3): THOMAS SMITH****, PHIL TILLMAN**, Ron Idoko**

Linebacker (3): J.J. HORNE****, Keith Malley*, Doug Roseberry**

Strong Safety (0):

Free Safety (1): TEZ MORRIS****

Cornerback (1): BERNARD "JOSH" LAY****

SPECIALISTS (1)

Kicker (1): JOSH CUMMINGS**

Punter (0):

Long Snapper (0):

LETTERMEN RETURNING: 46

STARTERS RETURNING: 13

20 Offense (6 starters)

23 Defense (6 starters)

3 Specialists (1 starter)

LETTERMEN LOST: 23

STARTERS LOST: 11

14 Offense (5 starters)

8 Defense (5 starters)

1 Specialist (1 starter)

NOTE: Players are listed under 2005 positions. This listing does not reflect any position changes for the 2006 season.

CAPS indicate returning starters.

* indicates letters earned.



Charles Sallet

PRESEASON HONORS

PRESEASON BIG EAST

PREDICTIONS

Athlon Sports: Fourth
Lindy's: Fourth
Street & Smith's: Third
The Sporting News: Third
Phil Steele's College Football Preview: Second

INDIVIDUAL HONORS

H.B. BLADES Linebacker

Bronko Nagurski Trophy Watch List
Rotary Lombardi Award Watch List
Ronnie Lott Trophy Watch List
Athlon Sports All-American (second team)
Athlon Sports All-Big East (first team)
Blue Ribbon College Football Yearbook All-American
Blue Ribbon College Football Yearbook All-Big East
Lindy's All-American (second team)
Lindy's Big East Defensive Player of the Year
Lindy's All-Big East (first team)
Lindy's Nation's No. 2 Inside Linebacker
Playboy All-American
Street & Smith's All-American (third team)
Street & Smith's All-Big East
Street & Smith's Butkus Award Candidate
Street & Smith's Outland Trophy/Lombardi Award Candidate
Street & Smith's Bednarik Award/Nagurski Award Candidate
Street & Smith's Big East's "Hardest Hitter"
The Sporting News Nation's No. 6 Inside Linebacker
The Sporting News Big East Defensive Player of the Year
The Sporting News All-Big East (first team)
Phil Steele's College Football Preview Nation's No. 8 Inside Linebacker
Phil Steele's College Football Preview All-Big East (first team)
NationalChamps.net All-American (first team)

AARON BERRY Defensive Back

The Sporting News Big East's No. 11 Recruit

NATE BYHAM Tight End

Athlon Sports Nation's Top 100 Incoming Freshmen (No. 25)
Athlon Sports Big East's No. 1 Recruit
The Sporting News Big East's No. 5 Recruit

JOVANI CHAPPEL Defensive Back

Athlon Sports Big East's No. 17 Recruit

KEVIN COLLIER Running Back

Athlon Sports Nation's Top 100 Incoming Freshmen (No. 99)
Athlon Sports Big East's No. 6 Recruit
The Sporting News Big East's No. 6 Recruit

C.J. DAVIS Offensive Lineman

The Sporting News All-Big East (second team)
Phil Steele's College Football Preview All-Big East (third team)

DORIN DICKERSON Receiver

Athlon Sports Nation's Top 100 Incoming Freshmen (No. 36)
Athlon Sports Big East's No. 2 Recruit
Lindy's Nation's Top 100 Incoming Freshmen (No. 85)
The Sporting News Big East's No. 2 Recruit

ELIJAH FIELDS Receiver

Athlon Sports Nation's Top 100 Incoming Freshmen (No. 57)
Athlon Sports Big East's No. 4 Recruit
The Sporting News Big East's No. 16 Recruit

RICKY GARY Defensive Back

Athlon Sports Big East's No. 18 Recruit

ADAM GRAESSLE Punter

Athlon Sports All-Big East (second team)
Lindy's Nation's No. 9 Punter
Lindy's All-Big East (second team)
The Sporting News Nation's No. 5 Punter
The Sporting News All-Big East (first team)
Phil Steele's College Football Preview All-Big East (second team)
Phil Steele's College Football Preview Nation's No. 11 Punter

DEREK KINDER Receiver

Athlon Sports All-Big East (third team)
Phil Steele's College Football Preview All-Big East (second team)

JOHN MALECKI Defensive Lineman

Athlon Sports Big East's No. 8 Recruit
The Sporting News Big East's No. 7 Recruit

MCKENZIE MATHEWS Defensive Lineman

The Sporting News Big East's No. 15 Recruit

CEDRIC MCGEE Receiver

The Sporting News Newcomers to Watch (Redshirt Freshmen)

MIKE MCGLYNN Offensive Lineman

Athlon Sports All-Big East (third team)
Lindy's All-Big East (second team)
The Sporting News All-Big East (second team)
Phil Steele's College Football Preview All-Big East (first team)
Phil Steele's College Football Preview Nation's No. 39 Offensive Tackle

CHRIS MCKILLOP Defensive Lineman

Athlon Sports All-Big East (second team)
Street & Smith's All-Big East
The Sporting News All-Big East (second team)
Phil Steele's College Football Preview All-Big East (first team)

JEFF OTAH Offensive Lineman

Athlon Sports Big East's No. 12 Recruit
The Sporting News Big East Offensive Newcomer of the Year

TYLER PALKO Quarterback

Athlon Sports All-Big East (third team)
Lindy's Nation's No. 15 Quarterback
Lindy's Big East's "Top 10 NFL Talent" (No. 10)
Street & Smith's Big East's "Best Under Pressure"
Street & Smith's Davey O'Brien Award Candidate
Street & Smith's Honorable Mention All-American
The Sporting News Nation's No. 12 Quarterback
The Sporting News "Best QBs in a Two-Minute Drill"
Phil Steele's College Football Preview All-Big East (second team)
Phil Steele's College Football Preview Nation's No. 13 Quarterback

JASON PINKSTON Defensive Lineman

Athlon Sports Big East's No. 9 Recruit

DARRELLE REVIS Defensive Back

Bronko Nagurski Trophy Watch List
Athlon Sports All-American (first team)
Athlon Sports All-Big East (first team) — Cornerback
Athlon Sports All-Big East (second team) — Punt Returner
Blue Ribbon College Football Yearbook Big East Defensive Player of the Year
Blue Ribbon College Football Yearbook All-Big East — Cornerback
Blue Ribbon College Football Yearbook All-Big East — Punt Returner
Lindy's All-American (first team)
Lindy's Nation's No. 2 Cornerback
Lindy's No. 9 Bronko Nagurski Candidate
Lindy's All-Big East (first team)
Lindy's Big East's "Best Cover Man"
Lindy's Big East's "Top 10 NFL Talent" (No. 7)
Street & Smith's All-American (first team)

Street & Smith's All-Big East

Street & Smith's Thorpe Award Candidate
Street & Smith's Bednarik Award/Nagurski Award Candidate
The Sporting News Nation's No. 6 Cornerback
The Sporting News Nation's No. 16 Return Man
The Sporting News All-Big East (first team) — Cornerback
The Sporting News All-Big East (second team) — Kick Returner

The Sporting News Big East's "Fastest Defensive Back"

Phil Steele's College Football Preview All-American (second team)
Phil Steele's College Football Preview Nation's No. 4 Cornerback
Phil Steele's College Football Preview All-Big East (first team)
NationalChamps.net All-American (third team)

CHARLES SALLET Defensive Lineman

Athlon Sports All-Big East (third team)
Phil Steele's College Football Preview All-Big East (third team)

CLINT SESSION Linebacker

The Sporting News Nation's No. 19 Outside Linebacker
The Sporting News All-Big East (second team)
The Sporting News Big East's "Hardest Hitting Linebacker"
Phil Steele's College Football Preview All-Big East (third team)

JOHN SIMONITIS Offensive Lineman

Athlon Sports All-Big East (first team)
Lindy's All-Big East (second team)
Phil Steele's College Football Preview All-Big East (first team)
Phil Steele's College Football Preview Nation's No. 12 Offensive Guard

AARON SMITH Receiver

The Sporting News Big East's No. 9 Recruit

JOE THOMAS Offensive Lineman

Athlon Sports Nation's Top 100 Incoming Freshmen (No. 66)
Athlon Sports Big East's No. 5 Recruit



Darrelle Revis

HONORS LISTING AS OF JULY 1