



JoJo Gause caught a pass against Millersville last season.

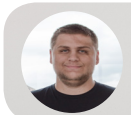
(IUP Athletics)



Samir Bullock rushed for a touchdown in a 2018 victory over Lock Haven.

(Ishaq Muhammad/The Penn)

2019 football schedule brings marquee matchups



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Following a 2018 season which saw IUP football falter to an 8-3 record after a national semifinal appearance the year prior, the Crimson Hawks will look to reclaim the PSAC West title and head back to national glory.

Much of the 2019 schedule is the same as last season's; the only changes are removing Ashland and Seton Hill and adding New Haven.

Game 1: New Haven Chargers, Sat. Sept. 7, 1 p.m.

The Crimson Hawks stray away from a Thursday night opener in 2019, starting the season with a Saturday afternoon contest against Division II powers New Haven, fresh off a postseason berth last year.

The 9-3 Chargers won eight straight games in the regular season and defeated West Chester in the first round of the playoffs before suffering a 59-20 loss to Slippery Rock.

New Haven averaged more than 30 points per game last season, but lost its starting quarterback Ajee Patterson, who threw for 2,878 yards in 2018.

The Chargers were tabbed to

win the Northeast-10 conference this year for the first time since 2012, as the now-defunct LIU Post squad kept them from the top spot last season.

IUP's last meeting with the Chargers came in the second round of the 2012 postseason, which ended 17-14 in favor of the Crimson Hawks, who are 5-3 all-time against New Haven.

Game 2: at Millersville Marauders, Sat. Sept. 14, 12 p.m.

The first game of what should be a very winnable trio for the Crimson Hawks will be the first road trip of the season as IUP will travel to Millersville University.

The two teams also met in the season's second game last year, where the Crimson Hawks put up 41 first-half points on their way to a 41-7 victory against the Marauders.

Millersville has not finished a season with a winning record since 2000 and finished 2018 with a 2-9 record.

The Marauders saw four quarterbacks see significant playing time in 2018, with just one (Collin Shank) throwing for more than 1,000 yards, and the team's leading rusher had just 221 yards on the season. In the PSAC East, Millersville is tabbed to finish seventh out of eight teams in

the division.

The Marauders have not beaten IUP since 2006, with the Crimson Hawks holding a 13-5 advantage in meetings between the two teams dating back to 1988.

Game 3: Lock Haven Bald Eagles, Sat. Sept. 21, 4 p.m.

The Bald Eagles are the lone team projected to finish below Millersville in the PSAC East. Last season's matchup with IUP was a 59-17 Crimson Hawks victory, and Lock Haven's 2-9 2018 continued a streak of the Bald Eagles finishing each season since 1981 below .500.

The team sees leading rusher Chantz Swartz returning, but nobody is expecting Lock Haven to light the world on fire this season.

IUP's victory last season was the 33rd straight against the Bald Eagles, with the Crimson Hawks holding a 58-15-3 all-time record against them.

Game 4: at Mercyhurst Lakers, Sat. Sept 28, 1 p.m.

In a final tune-up before arguably the two biggest games of IUP's regular season, the Crimson Hawks will travel to Erie at the end of September to take on Mercyhurst.

If nothing else, the Lakers have been consistent, finishing with a 5-6

record in three of the last four seasons, including 2018, which ended with three consecutive victories against PSAC teams.

The Crimson Hawks took a 34-7 victory in this matchup last season.

Coming off facing two of the weakest PSAC teams, this game could be more troublesome than expected for the Crimson Hawks, especially since Mercyhurst will be near the tail end of playing four of its first five games at home. The Lakers are slated to finish fourth in the PSAC West.

IUP is 9-2 against the Lakers and has won the last eight meetings.

Game 5: California (Pa.) Vulcans, Sat. Oct. 5, 2 p.m.

The Coal Bowl matchup comes on homecoming weekend in 2019 as the Crimson Hawks look to avenge last season's 36-24 loss in this matchup.

The teams have passed the trophy back and forth in every matchup since 2012, which may bode well for IUP.

The Vulcans finished 7-4 in 2018 with the victory against IUP serving as the highlight of their season.

Top rusher Nelson Brown returns for his senior season after rushing for 1,201 yards last year.

California is projected to finish

above the Crimson Hawks in the PSAC West as the Vulcans were picked to finish second behind Slippery Rock.

IUP holds a cumulative 58-26-2 advantage over California since 1927.

Game 6: at Slippery Rock, Sat. Oct. 12, 2 p.m.

The Rock had its most successful season last year since 2015, winning 11 games and advancing deep into the NCAA Division II postseason before being eliminated by Notre Dame (Ohio) in the quarterfinals.

Last season's matchup ended in a 30-27 Slippery Rock victory which saw a lightning delay interrupt play and spoil the Crimson Hawks' homecoming matchup.

The Rock averaged nearly 40 points per game last season and will see starting quarterback Roland Rivers return to the squad.

Rivers was an effective dual-threat QB for The Rock, passing for 2,721 yards and rushing for 597 net yards.

This Western Pennsylvania rivalry has been relatively even through the years, with IUP holding a 46-38-2 advantage in matchups dating back to 1927.

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IUP football faces important second half of schedule

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Game 7: at Clarion Golden Eagles, Sat. Oct. 19, 12 p.m.

This matchup sits in the middle of a PSAC West murderer's row of sorts for the Golden Eagles, as they face California and Slippery Rock in the weeks immediately before and after their game against IUP.

Clarion's 2018 started off 4-1 and ended with six consecutive losses, one of which came in a 24-23 loss to the Crimson Hawks.

The Golden Eagles are looking for their first winning record since 2015 and have both their leading rusher and passer returning to the team in 2019.

IUP has dominated the all-time series with Clarion, accruing a 62-23-3 record against the Golden Eagles.

Game 8: Gannon Golden Knights, Sat. Oct. 26, 12 p.m.

Gannon's 2018 was generally a year to forget, as the Golden Knights finished the season 2-9.

That being said, they were able to win both their games in consecutive weeks, one of which was an impressive 29-15 upset victory over California.

The biggest loss for Gannon is the graduation of running back Marcus Jones, one of the best players in program history and a winner of a multitude of Division II awards.

The Golden Knights used three different quarterbacks in at least four games last season, and a pair of them (Jason Dambach and Jimmy Keefe) return to the roster in 2019.

IUP has an 8-3 record and four straight wins against Gannon in a

decade's worth of matchups.

Game 9: at Seton Hill Griffins, Sat. Nov. 2, 12 p.m.

Seton Hill is in the stretch of a disappointing stretch of football over the last decade or so, never really being considered a threat in the PSAC.

Its lone victory in 2018 came in a one-point victory against Mercyhurst, and the Griffins were winless in 2017.

Opponents scored twice as many points per game as the Griffins in 2018, and the team was picked to finish last in the PSAC West in the preseason coaches' poll.

All in all, there just really aren't a lot of positives to look at with Seton Hill. IUP has never lost to the Griffins, winning all six matchups against the team that have taken

place annually since 2013.

Game 10: Edinboro Fighting Scots, Sat. Nov. 9, 12 p.m.

Last season's matchup between Edinboro and the Crimson Hawks was a low-scoring affair, as the group of graduating seniors earned their last win as IUP players in a 13-6 victory.

The Fighting Scots have had three consecutive winning seasons since an 0-11 year in 2015 and are predicted to finish fifth in the PSAC West this season.

Edinboro returns eight starters on offense but will lose top rusher Walter Fletcher and his 1,624 yards of production on the ground in 2018.

IUP has a 59-22-4 record in matchups with the Scots since their first matchup in 1927.

Game 11: at Shippensburg Red Raiders, Sat. Nov. 16, 1 p.m. OR PSAC Championship Game

If the Crimson Hawks return to the PSAC Championship in 2019, that matchup would supplant this season-ending road trip to Shippensburg.

This matchup was arguably IUP's worst game of last season, as the Red Raiders played a solid game and pulled away late to defeat the Crimson Hawks 45-21 on a frigid November Saturday.

Shippensburg, a consistently successful team in the PSAC East, hasn't had a losing season since 2010 and are expected to contend for the East title, picked in preseason polls to finish fourth.

Overall, the Crimson Hawks are 43-17-4 in matchups against the Raiders dating back to 1930.

Who starts, sits for 2019's fantasy season? Just ask Seth!

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Quarterbacks I'd sit this season:

Carson Wentz (Philadelphia): Despite Wentz and the Eagles returning to Lincoln Financial with some of the best talent in the league this season, drafting him at or around his current ESPN ADP of 77 is not worth the risk.

Even though we have seen Wentz's ceiling (QB5 in 13 games in 2017), we've also seen his floor (QB23 in 11 games in 2018) due to injuries. Until you see it, you're better off waiting with so much depth at the position this season.

Drew Brees (New Orleans): Again, due to the nature of depth at quarterback this season, Brees falls into the same category as Mr. Wentz.

And while Brees has been a top 10 fantasy quarterback in each of the last seven seasons, there are also probably lowly or non-drafted quarterbacks who could finish in the top five.

Robert Griffin at QB4 in 2012, Andy Dalton at QB5 in 2013, Blake Bortles at QB4 in 2015 and Alex Smith at QB4 in 2017 all fall into that category.

Need I say more, especially with a decent group of rookies who might just start right away?



Saints quarterback Drew Brees may not be worth an early draft pick this year.

Running backs I'd start this season:

Marlon Mack (Indianapolis): This was going to be the section where I hyped up Marlon Mack to be a RB2 with potential to be a top five RB by season's end. Then, Andrew Luck's shocking retirement put a damper on that.

However, all signs in Indianapolis point to Mack, who is currently being drafted at RB 23, being a true, three-down-back. And Jacoby Brissett, the new leader of the pack in Indianapolis, has the potential to be better than others expect.

With most likely fewer trips to the red zone for Mack, now Luckless, his upside is most likely limited to a solid RB2 with the floor of a shaky flex play.

Phillip Lindsay (Denver): In his first season after being an undrafted walk on for his hometown team, Lindsay toted 1037 rushing yards on just 192 carries, averaging an impressive 5.4 yards per carry.

This popular week one waiver wire steal from last season finished the season as RB13 in PPR formats

and is currently being drafted as RB28.

Yes, the Broncos have indicated they want to go to more of a committee with Royce Freeman potentially getting more action. But that could be a positive, rather than a negative.

After bolstering its run protection in the draft (Noah Fant, TE and Dalton Risner, OT) and another year for the defense to mature, Denver could be Seattle of the AFC, trying to win on the ground and with defense.

Running backs I'd sit this season:

Mark Ingram (Baltimore): Don't get me wrong – the former Heisman Trophy winner may still have some juice left, but Ravens running backs usually come at too high of a price for their return capital. Just ask last year's Alex Collins owners, or 2017 Justin Forsett owners.

While the Ravens, under second-year quarterback Lamar Jackson, are going to attempt to run the ball, I prefer rookie Justice Hill, who had more than 3,500 yards in three seasons at Oklahoma State.

Kenyan Drake (Miami): This has been a familiar place for Drake – on my sit lists during the last year. And the saddest part is it's not because I don't think Drake is a talented back. It's the situation.

Drake, who's still dealing with an injury, is on a team that many are projecting to finish the season in dead last and has second-year back Kalen Ballage nipping at his heels for carries.

With an ADP in the 50s, Drake is too high of a price to pay for the limited upside he presents.

Catch the rest of Seth's advice in this article on our website at ThePenn.org.