



BOSTON COLLEGE

COACH

Jeff Jagodzinski (11-3 in one year)

2007 RECORD

11-3, 6-2

2007 BOWL

Beat Mich. State 24-21 in Champs Sports Bowl

STARTERS RETURNING

6 on offense, 6 on defense (including 2 def. starters from 2006 who missed last season)

KEY PLAYERS

TE Ryan Purvis, WR Brandon Robinson, DT Ron Brace, DE Alex Albright, LB Brian Toal

KEY LOSSES

QB Matt Ryan, RB Andre Callender, OT Gosder Cherilus, S Jamie Silva, LB Jolonn Dunbar, CB DeJuan Tribble

QUOTABLE

Jeff Jagodzinski on Chris Crane playing QB instead of Matt Ryan:

"We can get him out on the edge a little bit more than what we could do with Matt. We'll still do our drop-back passing, but I think we'll be able to move him around a little bit more because he's more mobile — more bootlegs, more [QB] keeps. Because he can run. He's more athletic than what Matt was; the intangibles, I don't know."

Jagodzinski on the loss of key offensive starters: "Our defense is going to have to carry us for the first part of the season until we get some of these ... guys with very little experience, get them up to speed. That's the strength of our football team, is our front seven on defense. So they're going to have to step up and really play."



CLEMSON

COACH

Tommy Bowden (69-42 in nine years, 87-46 in 11 years overall)

2007 RECORD

9-4, 5-3

2007 BOWL

Lost to Auburn 23-20 in OT in Chick-fil-A Bowl

STARTERS RETURNING

7 on offense, 7 on defense (including injured DT Rashaad Jackson, out until at least midseason)

KEY PLAYERS

QB Cullen Harper, RB James Davis, RB C.J. Spiller, WR Aaron Kelly, S Michael Hamlin, NG Dorell Scott

KEY LOSSES

OT Barry Richardson, OG Chris McDuffie, DE Phillip Merling

QUOTABLE

Tommy Bowden on not yet having led Clemson to an ACC title: "There's not a book [where] you turn to page 13 on getting over the hurdle. The biggest thing I learned from my father [when] getting into coaching still applies — patience and perseverance. For so many years he was wide right, wide right, wide left, wide right, and then he finally hit one. I think we'll do the same."

S Michael Hamlin on the defense: "The swagger that we've got about ourselves, the demeanor that we've got, it's different than it was."



DUKE

COACH

David Cutcliffe (first season at Duke, 44-29 in seven years overall)

2007 RECORD

1-11, 0-8

2007 BOWL

None

STARTERS RETURNING

7 on offense, 10 on defense

KEY PLAYERS

QB Thaddeus Lewis, WR Eron Riley, TB Re'quan Boyette, LB Vincent Ray, LB Michael Tauiliili

KEY LOSSES

WR Jomar Wright, C Matt Rumsey, FS Chris Davis

QUOTABLE

DT Vince Oghobaase on David Cutcliffe taking over the program: "We're under a new regime right now and things are looking very, very positive for Duke football. But we can't keep on talking about what we're going to do. We're going to have to go out there and show people so they can believe. That's what we're going to do [in the opener] against James Madison."

Cutcliffe on getting Duke to play better in the second halves of games: "You have to learn to be a finisher. It's how we operate in the weight room, it's how we do it on the field. We want to finish every job we have. We want to finish our tests better. You've got to adhere to the old [Vince] Lombardi theory that winning is an all-the-time thing, particularly when you've been losing a lot."



FLORIDA STATE

COACH

Bobby Bowden (300-87-4 in 32 years, 373-119-4 in 42 years overall)

2007 RECORD

7-6, 4-4

2007 BOWL

Lost to Kentucky 35-28 in Music City Bowl

STARTERS RETURNING

6 on offense, 7 on defense

KEY PLAYERS

QB Drew Weatherford, OG Rodney Hudson, DE Everette Brown, S Myron Rolle

KEY LOSSES

PK Gary Cismesia, WR De'Cody Fagg, LB Geno Hayes, DT Andre Fluellen

QUOTABLE

Bobby Bowden on his offensive line: "We're going to be so doggone young in the offensive line. I think the oldest guy on our offensive line will be a sophomore."

DE Everette Brown on restoring the program: "You say, 'I've got a spear on my helmet, so when we go out there on the field, everybody's going to lay down.' You look at the big stadium, all the trophies — 'I'm a part of that.' Well, you didn't earn any of it. What are you going to do build onto the legacy that was there before you? We're going to go out there with a chip on our shoulder to prove to everybody once again that we're Florida State."



GEORGIA TECH

COACH

Paul Johnson (first season, 107-39 in 11 years overall)

2007 RECORD

7-6, 4-4

2007 BOWL

Lost to Fresno State 40-28 in Humanitarian Bowl

STARTERS RETURNING

4 on offense, 4 on defense

KEY PLAYERS

OT Andrew Gardner, WR Greg Smith, DT Vance Walker, DT Darryl Richard, DE Michael Johnson

KEY LOSSES

QB Taylor Bennett, C Kevin Tuminello, RB Tashard Choice, LB Philip Wheeler, DE Darrell Robertson, PK Travis Bell, P Durant Brooks

QUOTABLE

OT Andrew Gardner on Paul Johnson's triple-option offense: "The key to it is that everybody really does buy in and that it's executed properly. ... If there's one thing I'm sure he's going to focus on getting down this camp, it's going to be the quarterback-'A back' pitch relationship. Once they get that down, I think it can be pretty dangerous."

DT Vance Walker on the new defensive approach: "We're not going to blitz as much. We're going to play a lot more man-to-man, which I think will help. ... We played a lot of zone last year, so the quarterback would find the seam."



MARYLAND

COACH

Ralph Friedgen (56-31 in seven years)

2007 RECORD

6-7, 3-5

2007 BOWL

Lost to Oregon State 21-14 in Emerald Bowl

STARTERS RETURNING

9 on offense, 5 on defense

KEY PLAYERS

QB Jordan Steffy, WR Darrius Heyward-Bay, C Edwin Williams, LB Dave Philistin, LB Moise Fokou

KEY LOSSES

OG Andrew Crumme, TB Keon Lattimore, TB Lance Ball, DT Dre Moore, LB Erin Henderson

QUOTABLE

C Edwin Williams on the team's new West Coast offense: "Some offenses are kind of like, 'Run, run, pass. Run, run, pass.' This is like, 'Pass. Oh, you're still catching? Pass. Touchdown.' We're definitely still going to run the ball, but you know in any West Coast offense, it's going to be a lot more passing."

DT Jeremy Navarre on the team's new 3-5 defense: "We were a little skeptical before spring ball, but ... everybody likes it a lot. Our offense ... had trouble blocking it. They really don't know where we're going to go a lot of times. The change is definitely going to help."



MIAMI

COACH

Randy Shannon (5-7 in one year)

2007 RECORD

5-7, 2-6

2007 BOWL

None

STARTERS RETURNING

4 on offense, 6 on defense

KEY PLAYERS

OT Jason Fox, RB Javarris James, RB Graig Cooper, LB Colin McCarthy, LB Darryl Sharpton

KEY LOSSES

QB Kyle Wright, OG Derrick Morse, DE Calais Campbell, LB Tavares Gooden, S Kenny Phillips

QUOTABLE

Randy Shannon on getting the team to play better in the second halves of games: "We had games last year that we came back from behind and we didn't know how to finish. There's a bunch of freshmen out there and sophomores out there and they're trying to finish games and they're looking at guys that maybe [their] mind-set wasn't right — they were thinking about themselves. Anything that we do, we talk about finishing."

OT Jason Fox on chemistry making the team better: "We've obviously had a lot of talent. What it takes is the team bonding ... and everyone on the team caring about the same goals. ... That's how you get good. We've gotten a lot better at that."



NORTH CAROLINA

COACH

Butch Davis (4-8 in one year, 55-28 in seven years overall)

2007 RECORD

4-8, 3-5

2007 BOWL

None

STARTERS RETURNING

9 on offense, 8 on defense

KEY PLAYERS

QB T.J. Yates, WR Hakeem Nicks, WR Brandon Tate, RB Greg Little, S Deunta Williams

KEY LOSSES

DT Kentwan Balmer, DE Hilee Taylor, LB Durell Mapp, PK Connor Barth

QUOTABLE

Butch Davis on improvements the team must make: "We've got to run the ball better and not turn the ball over as much. We've got to do a great job on special teams. We really didn't dominate the field position aspect on special teams like a good football team needs to."

WR Hakeem Nicks on the team's higher expectations: "We definitely can peak this year. ... Look at what Wake Forest did two years ago. ... We know we have talent. It's just a matter of us putting it together. That's what we've struggled with over the years."



N.C. STATE

COACH

Tom O'Brien (5-7 in one year, 80-52 in 11 years overall)

2007 RECORD

5-7, 3-5

2007 BOWL

None

STARTERS RETURNING

6 on offense, 4 on defense (including TE Anthony Hill, a 2006 starter who missed last year)

KEY PLAYERS

QB Daniel Evans, TB Jamelle Eugene, TB Andre Brown, DT Alan-Michael Cash, DE Willie Young

KEY LOSSES

WR-RS Darrell Blackman, WR John Dunlap, OG Kalani Heppe, DT DeMario Pressley, SS DaJuan Morgan

QUOTABLE

Tom O'Brien on TB Jamelle Eugene: "He's a complete back. He can run with the ball. He can catch the ball. He can pass-protect. That's the type of guy you want back there."

O'Brien on the improvements the offense must make: "We have to run the ball better. We can't be second-to-last in the conference rushing the football [again]. And you can't have your quarterback position throw 14 touchdown passes and 23 interceptions [combined]. Those numbers have to be reversed if you're going to be a championship football program."



WAKE FOREST

COACH

Jim Grobe (46-39 in seven years, 79-72-1 in 13 years overall)

2007 RECORD

9-4, 5-3

2007 BOWL

Beat UConn 24-10 in Meineke Car Care Bowl

STARTERS RETURNING

5 on offense, 9 on defense

KEY PLAYERS

QB Riley Skinner, TB Josh Adams, LB Aaron Curry, SS Chip Vaughn, CB Alphonso Smith, PK-P Sam Swank

KEY LOSSES

WR Kenny Moore, C Steve Justice, FB-TE John Tereshinski, DE Jeremy Thompson, DT Zach Stukes

QUOTABLE

Jim Grobe on being picked second in the division in the ACC poll: "Two years ago when we were picked sixth [and won the ACC title], I really felt we were going to be good. ... Being picked second for your program is somewhat of a rewarding feeling, but at the same time it's a little scary because we played pretty good from sixth. ... We've got a chance to be a good football team, but at the same time we play a really, really tough schedule. ... [Getting picked second] probably hurts me more than it helps me because there's a chance my kids will look at this and say, 'Hey, we've arrived.' "

5 players to watch

You know about the Hokies and Cavs, but here are some other ACC players to keep your eye on

▶ JAMES DAVIS

Clemson tailback

2007 first-team All-ACC; ran for 1,064 yards, becoming just the third Tiger to ever have two 1,000-yard rushing seasons; ran for 10 TDs and caught two TD passes; moved up to second on school career lists in TDs (38) and rushing yards (3,130).

Teammate Cullen Harper says of Davis "James works really hard in the weight room. James just has a demeanor about him. He's really passionate about what he does. Seeing him come in and work hard day in and day out just lets you know how focused he is and what football means to him."

CULLEN HARPER

Clemson quarterback

2007 second-team All-ACC; led ACC in passing efficiency; broke 22 school records, including most TD passes in a season (27); finished second on school single-season lists in passing yards (2,991), completions (282), attempts (433) and completion percentage (65.1).

Harper says "In spring practice, I was moving better in the pocket. I was ... avoiding pressure and making throws, whereas last year I think I would run out of the pocket. This year I would just adjust in the pocket, maybe move to my right or left and step up and make the throw."

HAKEEM NICKS

UNC receiver

2007 second-team All-ACC; school-record 74 catches; finished third on school single-season list in receiving yards (958); caught five TD passes; ranked second in ACC with 79.8 receiving yards per game; ranked third in ACC with 6.2 catches per game.

Nicks says "I'm trying to get faster, catch some guys off guard with that. Keep making circus catches and big plays. If you line up in front of me, I'm just going to go hard. I'm going to try to make it a long day for you. I'm going to push you to the limit to see how good you really are."

ALPHONSO SMITH

Wake Forest cornerback

2007 third-team Associated Press All-American; first-team All-ACC; led Division I-A with school-record eight interceptions, returning three for TDs; had 100-yard interception return for a TD; led ACC with four forced fumbles and 18 passes defended; had 44 tackles and three sacks.

Smith says "This game has shifted from a physical game for me to a mental one. Out of eight interceptions last year, I can guarantee you I got six of them just being mentally prepared ... and knowing what was going to happen. I love to go into the film room."

VANCE WALKER

Georgia Tech defensive tackle

2007 third-team Associated Press All-American; first-team All-ACC; had 45 tackles, 8 1/2 sacks and 14 tackles for loss; forced three fumbles.

Walker says "They'll probably double-team me a lot more this year. ... I might not even make as many plays as I did last year, but I'm taking people out of the play, so somebody else is going to get to the quarterback or whoever's got the ball. I do want to make the plays. ... But if I get double-teamed, that's fine. I want to get double-teamed."

— Team capsules and players to watch by Mark Berman

