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SACRAMENTO STATE FOOTBALL

Big Sky Champions: 2019, 2021, 2022 • NCAA FCS Playoff Appearances 2019, 2021, 2022, 2023
39 FCS All-Americans • 20 NFL Players • 10th Most Wins in FCS Since 2019



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SEASON OUTLOOK

Get an inside look at the 2021 Sacramento State Hornets with rosters, position breakdowns and more.



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THE COACHES

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Get to know each member of the 2024 Hornet football team. Bios include stats, hometown and high school info.



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RECORD BOOK

The complete source for Sacramento State football history. Find records, results, awards and other accolades.



QUICK FACTS

2025 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

Date	Day	Opponent	Time
Aug. 30	Sat.	at South Dakota State	4 p.m.
Sept. 6	Sat.	at Nevada	2 p.m.
Sept. 13	Sat.	MERCYHURST	6 p.m.
Sept. 20	Sat.	CENTRAL ARKANSAS	6 p.m.
Sept. 27	Sat.	CAL POLY*	6 p.m.
Oct. 11	Sat.	at Weber State*	5 p.m.
Oct. 18	Sat.	NORTHERN COLORADO*#	6 p.m.
Oct. 24	Fri.	MONTANA* (ESPN2)	7:30 p.m.
Nov. 1	Sat.	at Eastern Washington*	1 p.m.
Nov. 8	Sat.	at Portland State*	2 p.m.
Nov. 15	Sat.	IDAHO*	6 p.m.
Nov. 22	Sat.	at UC Davis*	1 p.m.

2024 FOOTBALL RESULTS

Date	Rank	Opponent	Result
Aug. 29	(10/8)	at San Jose State	L, 42-24
Sept. 7	(8/8)	at Fresno State	L, 46-30
Sept. 14	(11/11)	NICHOLLS (24/23)	W, 34-7
Sept. 21	(11/11)	at East Texas A&M	W, 34-0
Sept. 28	(10/10)	at Northern Arizona*	L, 34-16
Oct. 12	(18/20)	EASTERN WASHINGTON*	L, 35-28
Oct. 19	(RV/RV)	WEBER STATE*	W, 51-48 (2OT)
Oct. 26	(RV/RV)	at Idaho State*	L, 30-27 (OT)
Nov. 2		PORTLAND STATE*	L, 58-38
Nov. 9		at Montana State* (2/2)	L, 49-7
Nov. 16		at Cal Poly*	L, 26-23
Nov. 23		UC DAVIS* (5/5)	L, 42-39

All Times Pacific | ALL CAPS and BOLD indicate home games

* Big Sky Conference games | # Homecoming | ^ NCAA FCS Playoffs

UNIVERSITY INFORMATION

Location	Sacramento, Calif.
Founded	1947
Enrollment	30,883
Nickname	Hornets
Colors	Green & Gold (PMS 343, 4525)
President	Dr. J. Luke Wood
Director of Athletics	Mark Orr
Faculty Athletic Representative	Dr. Maureen Smith

FOOTBALL INFORMATION

Classification	NCAA Football Championship Subdivision
Conference	Big Sky Conference
Stadium (Capacity)	Hornet Stadium (21,195)
Surface	SprinTurf
2024 Overall Record	3-9
2024 Big Sky Record/Finish	1-7/T11th
Letterwinners Returning/Lost	32/43
Starters Returning (O/D/ST)/Lost	6 (3/2/1)/20 (8/10/2)

COACHING STAFF

Head Coach	Brennan Marion
Alma Mater	Tulsa, '09
Sacramento State Record	First year
Career Record	Same

Assistant Coaches

Kenneth Merchant	Off. Coordinator/Quarterbacks
AC Patterson	Co-Off. Coordinator/Running Backs
Marcus Patton	Def. Coordinator
Josh Brown	Co-Def. Coordinator/Inside Linebackers
Darrin Walls	Cornerbacks/Def. Pass Game Coordinator
Rob Wenger	Special Teams Coordinator
Robbie Bell	Tight Ends
Nathan Kenion	Safeties
Sidhart Krishnamurthi	Wide Receivers
Ed McGilvra	Def. Line
Kris Richardson	Off. Line
Jake Vang	Edge Rushers

Support Staff

Zach Potter	General Manager
Chris Parry	Assistant GM
Aliyah Walker	Dir. of Football Administration
Tony "Shark" Rozier	Special Asst. to Head Coach
Kenny O'Mary	Asst. A.D./Sports Performance
Kenny Macklin	Dir. of Football Operations
Joey Moss	Dir. of Player Personnel
Bobby Fresques	Lead Analyst/Dir. of Alumni Relations
Kyle Wagner	Off. Analyst
Anthony Laws	Special Teams Analyst
Lem Adams	Off. Quality Control/Asst. Wide Receivers
Dan Reakes	Dir. of Scouting
Justin Houlihan	Off. Graduate Assistant
Kaden Richardson	Off. Graduate Assistant
Melquise Stovell	Dir. of Speed and Development
Trevor Trout	Def. Graduate Assistant
CJ Pollard	Recruiting/Special Projects

ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS

Director (Football Contact)	Brian Berger
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STADIUM/GAMEDAY



HORNET STADIUM

- Originally built in 1969, Hornet Stadium is the home for Sacramento State football. The facility has a capacity of 21,195 — the second largest in the Big Sky Conference.
- A new playing surface was installed prior to the 2021 season. The Sprinturf surface features the yardage numbers in Sacramento State's font, the Big Sky Conference logos stitched into the field and new gold end zones. The surface also has a shock pad beneath it and an infill which is designed to reduce heat.
- Hornet Stadium has served as the home of several professional football teams including the Sacramento Surge of the World League, the Sacramento Gold Miners of the Canadian Football League and Sacramento Mountain Lions of the United Football League.
- The stadium has also hosted the 2000 and 2004 U.S. Olympic Track and Field Trials and four NCAA Div. I Outdoor Track and Field Championships (2003, 2005, 2006, 2007).
- The stadium is surrounded by The Well to the north and the Broad Athletic Fieldhouse to the south. The Well is Sacramento State's student recreation and health center. It opened in 2010 (expanded in 2021) and features a large weight room, indoor spaces for basketball, volleyball, racquetball and soccer, a rock climbing wall and an elevated running track.
- The Broad Athletic Fieldhouse is the home to Hornet football and track and field. Built in 2008, it includes coaches offices, meeting spaces, locker rooms, training rooms and weight rooms for the teams.

GAMEDAY

- The celebration of Hornet football begins well before kickoff with a lively tailgate party outside of Hornet Stadium. Fans then greet the team for Hornet Walk which includes the Sacramento State marching band, cheer and dance teams.
- Once inside, Sacramento State students sit directly behind the Hornet bench at midfield. A new VIP fan section was added in the north end zone during the 2019 season.





ROSTER

ALPHABETICAL ROSTER

52	Dean Abdullah	OL
96	Hamish Adams	P
28	Sam Adams II	RB
4	Koa Akui	S
86	Davis Ambuehl	TE
21	Hayden Anderson	WR
3	Jordan Anderson	WR
55	Miles Bailey	DL
80	Trey Bass	WR
35	Hunter Boeddeker	ILB
14	Currion Borders	RB
23	Elias Brown	RB
17	Ajon Bryant	ATH
97	Nash Burkart	S
21	Dejuan Butler	NB
31	Jackson Cahoon	ILB
13	Ernest Campbell	WR
19	Josh Cashiola	OLB
24	Lono Chouteau	S
8	Tim Conerly	WR
1	Jamar Curtis	RB
44	Diego Davis	ILB
13	Yebrell Emerson	S
32	Matthew Eskridge II	ILB
81	Tre Fernandez	WR
99	Joseph Firebaugh	K
83	Jaxon Fresques	WR
14	Drey Garner	WR
91	James Gillespie	DL
34	Dylan Gooden	OLB
38	Diesel Gordon	S
65	Cade Gretlein	OL
2	Rodney Hammond, Jr.	RB
56	Dylan Hampsten	DL
72	Sawyer Hays	OL
4	Damian Henderson II	RB
79	Jordan Herman	OL
16	Kaleb Higgins	S
11	Jamal Hood	S
10	Derek Houston	LB
85	Elijah Huddle	TE
92	Jordan Jefferson	DL
28	KJ Jefferson	S
24	Michael Johnson	RB
23	Lamont Johnson-Burrell	CB
47	Adam Johnston	LS
15	Jekob Jones	ILB
93	Malachi Kindle	DL
66	Giovanni Kovacs	OL
63	Graysen Lee	OL
1	Ricky Lee III	CB
6	Jamar Malone	QB
90	Syncere Massey	DL
68	Davis May	OL
9	Damien McDaniel	ATH
37	Connor McDowell	LS
58	Jayland McGlothen	DL
91	Cal McGough	P
78	Richard McKay	OL
17	Anta'Veon McKenzie	S

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Exp.	Hometown/Previous School
0	Savion Red	RB	5-10	214	Sr.	TR	Grand Prairie, Texas/Nevada
1	Jamar Curtis	RB	5-8	164	Sr.	TR	Waldorf, Md./Lafayette
1	Ricky Lee III	CB	5-10	175	So.	TR	Atlanta, Ga./UAB
2	Rodney Hammond, Jr.	RB	5-9	195	Sr.	TR	Norfolk, Va./Pittsburgh
2	Deven Wright	OLB	6-5	215	Sr.	TR	Southaven, Miss./Texas State
3	Jordan Anderson	WR	5-11	165	RFr.	TR	Inglewood, Calif./Oregon State
3	Brodie Tagaloa	DL	6-5	270	Jr.	TR	Pittsburg, Calif./Nebraska
4	Koa Akui	S	5-10	187	Jr.	2V	Hilo, Hawaii/Hilo HS
4	Damian Henderson II	RB	6-2	205	So.	TR	Compton, Calif./Colorado State
5	Oscar Moore	LB	6-1	208	Sr.	TR	Fort Worth, Texas/UTEP
5	Jaden Rashada	QB	6-4	185	So.	TR	Pittsburg, Calif./Georgia
6	Jamar Malone	QB	6-2	205	Fr.	HS	Los Angeles, Calif./Warren HS
6	Warren Smith, Jr.	CB	6-1	190	So.	TR	Richmond, Calif./Washington State
7	Cardell Williams	QB	6-2	183	Jr.	TR	Houston, Texas/Tulsa
7	Jalen Williams	NB	5-11	187	Sr.	1V	Lancaster, Calif./Fresno State
8	Tim Conerly	WR	5-9	165	Sr.	TR	New Orleans, La./UNLV
8	Kris Ross	DL	6-2	273	Jr.	TR	Houston, Texas/Nevada
9	Damien McDaniel	ATH	6-0	165	RFr.	TR	Hitchcock, Texas/UNLV
9	Malik Tullis	DL	5-11	291	Jr.	TR	Fairburn, Ga./Eastern Michigan
10	Derek Houston	ILB	6-1	224	So.	1V	Rocklin, Calif./Rocklin HS
10	Jace Wilson	WR	6-4	210	Jr.	TR	Denton, Texas/UTSA
11	Jamal Hood	S	6-0	185	Jr.	JC	Kettering, Md./Highlands CC
11	Gavin Thomson	WR	6-1	195	Sr.	TR	Allison Park, Pa./Saint Francis
12	Jason Oliver	CB	6-0	169	Jr.	2V	Bakersfield, Calif./Colorado
12	Onterio Smith, Jr.	WR	6-2	195	So.	1V	Sacramento, Calif./Folsom HS
13	Ernest Campbell	WR	5-9	145	RFr.	TR	Refugio, Texas/Texas A&M
13	Yebrell Emerson	S	6-2	203	Jr.	RS	Fresno, Calif./Fresno City JC
14	Currion Borders	RB	5-7	184	So.	1V	Sacramento, Calif./Antelope HS
14	Drey Garner	WR	6-0	180	Fr.	HS	San Diego, Calif./University City HS
14	Brennon Scott	OLB	6-1	235	Sr.	TR	Lancaster, Texas/UNLV
15	Luke Sprague	QB	6-5	220	Sr.	TR	Springfield, Pa./Bethune-Cookman
15	Je'kob Jones	ILB	6-0	220	Sr.	TR	Fresno, Calif./Cal Poly
16	Kaleb Higgins	S	6-2	198	Sr.	2V	Austin, Texas/Cal
16	Jordan Williams	TE	6-5	230	Jr.	TR	Riverside, Calif./Colorado State
17	Ajon Bryant	ATH	5-6	152	RFr.	RS	Santa Ana, Calif./Mater Dei HS
17	Anta'Veon McKenzie	S	6-1	196	So.	1V	Stockton, Calif./Edison HS
18	Tye Nickens	WR	5-11	170	Fr.	HS	Petaluma, Calif./St. Vincent DePaul HS
18	Fata Puloka	OLB	6-3	221	So.	1V	Sacramento, Calif./Monterey Trail HS
19	Josh Cashiola	DL	6-3	229	Sr.	2V	Houston, Texas/Fresno City JC
19	Logan Tanner	TE	6-3	235	So.	TR	Houston, Texas/San Diego State
20	Adam Taylor	CB	5-10	150	RFr.	RS	Stockton, Calif./St. Mary's HS
21	Hayden Anderson	WR	6-1	180	Fr.	HS	Windsor, Calif./Windsor HS
21	Dejuan Butler	NB	5-11	206	Gr.	1V	Antioch, Calif./Cal
22	Elias Mullican	CB	6-1	172	Jr.	2V	Rocklin, Calif./Rocklin HS
22	Jaquail Smith	RB	5-11	175	Fr.	HS	Orlando, Fla./Jones HS
23	Elias Brown	RB	6-0	232	Jr.	JC	Antelope, Calif./American River JC
23	Lamont Johnson-Burrell	CB	6-3	182	Jr.	2V	Sacramento, Calif./Sacramento HS
24	Lono Chouteau	S	6-4	175	Fr.	HS	Sacramento, Calif./Inderkum HS
24	Michael Johnson	RB	5-7	189	Sr.	3V	Oxnard, Calif./Pacifica HS
25	Naytel Mitchell	S	5-10	190	Fr.	HS	Pittsburgh, Pa./Penn Hills HS
26	Max Susini	LB	6-2	215	Fr.	HS	Los Angeles, Calif./IMG Academy
27	Mike Taylor	ILB	6-3	205	Fr.	HS	East St. Louis, Ill./East St. Louis HS
28	Sam Adams II	RB	6-2	212	Sr.	TR	Kirkland, Wash./Washington
28	KJ Jefferson	S	6-0	200	Fr.	HS	St. Louis, Mo./Lutheran North HS
30	Pita Vi	OLB	6-2	250	Jr.	JC	Elk Grove, Calif./San Mateo JC
31	Jackson Cahoon	ILB	6-1	215	Fr.	HS	Mountain View, Calif./St. Francis HS
32	Matthew Eskridge II	ILB	6-1	225	Jr.	RS	Las Vegas, Nev./Riverside JC
33	Alex Rocha	ILB	6-2	213	Jr.	1V	Bakersfield, Calif./Bakersfield HS
34	Dylan Gooden	OLB	6-3	212	So.	TR	Columbia, Md./Maryland
35	Hunter Boeddeker	ILB	6-0	222	Jr.	2V	Santa Barbara, Calif./Bishop Diego HS



No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Exp.	Hometown/Previous School
37	Connor McDowell	LS	6-0	180	Sr.	TR	Los Angeles, Calif./Angelo State
38	Diesel Gordon	S	6-0	175	So.	JC	Arlington, Texas/Butler JC
38	Sammy Norris	FB	6-0	285	Sr.	TR	Las Vegas, Nev./UNLV
39	Jayden Robinson	CB	6-2	185	Jr.	JC	Suisun City, Calif./Foothill JC
40	Caleb Reese	CB	6-0	180	Fr.	HS	Oceanside, Calif./San Marcos HS
44	Diego Davis	ILB	6-0	225	Jr.	JC	Napa, Calif./Santa Rosa JC
45	Xavier Williams	DL	6-4	266	Sr.	2V	Gustine, Calif./Atwater HS
46	Mike Melanson	P	5-11	186	Sr.	1V	Las Vegas, Calif./Sequoias JC
47	Adam Johnston	LS	6-0	225	So.	1V	Ripon, Calif./Modesto JC
48	Jojo Solis	S	5-11	175	Fr.	HS	Adelanto, Calif./Aquinas HS
49	Grant Meadors	K	5-11	180	So.	TR	Bakersfield, Calif./Oregon
51	Joseph Speno	OL	6-3	267	Jr.	1V	San Jose, Calif./Foothill JC
52	Dean Abdullah	OL	6-4	290	Sr.	TR	Sacramento, Calif./San Diego State
53	Elijah Ortiz	OL	6-1	300	Sr.	1V	Union City, Calif./Laney JC
55	Miles Bailey	DL	6-4	255	Jr.	TR	Vallejo, Calif./Murray State
56	Dylan Hampsten	DL	6-3	237	So.	TR	Santa Clarita, Calif./San Jose State
58	Jayland McGlothen	DL	6-2	270	So.	1V	Las Vegas, Nev./Silverado HS
59	DeSean Watts	DL	6-2	280	So.	JC	Fresno, Calif./Fresno City JC
62	Kenndel Riley	OL	6-3	353	Sr.	3V	Lincoln, Calif./Capital Christian HS
63	Graysen Lee	OL	6-6	280	Fr.	HS	Bakersfield, Calif./Frontier HS
64	Brandon Sousa	OL	6-4	306	Jr.	2V	Pleasanton, Calif./Foothill HS
65	Cade Gretlein	OL	6-4	289	So.	1V	Bakersfield, Calif./Liberty HS
66	Giovanni Kovacs	OL	6-4	300	RFr.	RS	Pleasanton, Calif./Amador Valley HS
67	Luke Slater	OL	6-2	270	RFr.	RS	Bellevue, Wash./Newport HS
68	Davis May	OL	6-4	314	So.	1V	Bakersfield, Calif./Garces Memorial HS
70	Jaxon Moore	OL	6-6	305	Fr.	HS	Roseville, Calif./West Park HS
71	Bryson Summers	OL	6-5	308	Jr.	1V	El Dorado Hills, Calif./Coastal Carolina
72	Sawyer Hays	OL	6-6	288	Sr.	3V	Sacramento, Calif./Christian Brothers HS
73	Jose Soto	OL	6-3	304	RFr.	1V	Tulare, Calif./Tulare Western HS
74	Aidan Meek	OL	6-5	300	Sr.	3V	Bakersfield, Calif./Garces Memorial HS
75	DeAnthony Sheffield	OL	6-4	310	Jr.	JC	Los Angeles, Calif./LA Southwest JC
77	Jeremiah Stallworth	OL	6-6	315	Fr.	HS	Palo Alto, Calif./Palo Alto HS
78	Richard McKay	OL	6-6	292	So.	1V	Vallejo, Calif./Clayton Valley Charter HS
79	Jordan Herman	OL	6-8	355	Jr.	TR	Fort Mill, S.C./Charlotte
80	Trey Bass	WR	5-10	188	Fr.	HS	St. Louis, Mo./Lutheran North HS
81	Tre Fernandez	WR	6-0	170	Fr.	HS	Sherman Oaks, Calif./Notre Dame HS
83	Jaxon Fresques	WR	5-7	175	Fr.	HS	Layton, Utah/Northridge HS
84	Dontae Robinson	WR	6-5	204	Jr.	JC	Tacoma, Wash./Sierra JC
85	Elijah Huddle	TE	6-3	205	Fr.	HS	Citrus Heights, Calif./Casa Roble HS
86	Davis Ambuehl	TE	6-7	230	Jr.	TR	Los Angeles, Calif./UNLV
87	Gavin Nelson	TE	6-4	245	Jr.	RS	Clovis, Calif./Fresno City JC
88	Bear Tenney	TE	6-6	255	Fr.	HS	Gilbert, Ariz./Lone Peak HS
90	Syncere Massey	DL	6-5	325	Jr.	TR	Fort Worth, Texas/Texas Southern
91	James Gillespie	DL	6-3	295	Sr.	TR	Woodbridge, Va./Middle Tennessee
91	Cal McGough	P	6-2	190	Sr.	3V	Geelong, Australia/St. Joseph's College
92	Jordan Jefferson	DL	6-2	305	Sr.	JC	Navasota, Texas/Kilgore JC
93	Malachi Kindle	DL	6-0	286	Fr.	HS	Los Angeles, Calif./Cathedral HS
94	Micah Mosley	OLB	6-4	235	Fr.	HS	San Jose, Calif./Valley Christian HS
96	Hamish Adams	P	6-2	198	Fr.	HS	Melbourne, Australia/Sandringham College
97	Nash Burkart	NB	6-1	165	Fr.	HS	Lihue, Hawaii/Kapa'a HS
99	Melvin Swindle II	DL	6-2	280	Sr.	TR	Oklahoma City, Okla./Eastern Michigan
99	Joseph Firebaugh	K	6-2	195	Jr.	TR	San Diego, Calif./UCLA

ALPHABETICAL ROSTER

49	Grant Meadors	K
74	Aidan Meek	OL
46	Mike Melanson	P
25	Naytel Mitchell	S
70	Jaxon Moore	OL
5	Oscar Moore	LB
94	Micah Mosley	OLB
22	Elias Mullican	CB
87	Gavin Nelson	TE
18	Tye Nickens	WR
38	Sammy Norris	FB
12	Jason Oliver	CB
53	Elijah Ortiz	OL
18	Fata Puloka	OLB
5	Jaden Rashada	QB
0	Savion Red	RB
40	Caleb Reese	CB
62	Kenndel Riley	OL
39	Jayden Robinson	CB
84	Dontae Robinson	WR
33	Alex Rocha	ILB
8	Kris Ross	DL
14	Brennon Scott	DL
75	DeAnthony Sheffield	OL
67	Luke Slater	OL
22	Jaquail Smith	RB
12	Onterio Smith, Jr.	WR
6	Warren Smith, Jr.	CB
48	Jojo Solis	S
73	Jose Soto	OL
64	Brandon Sousa	OL
51	Joseph Speno	OL
15	Luke Sprague	QB
77	Jeremiah Stallworth	OL
71	Bryson Summers	OL
26	Max Susini	LB
99	Melvin Swindle II	DL
3	Brodie Tagaloa	DL
19	Logan Tanner	TE
20	Adam Taylor	CB
27	Mike Taylor	ILB
88	Bear Tenney	TE
11	Gavin Thomson	WR
9	Malik Tullis	DL
30	Pita Vi	OLB
59	DeSean Watts	DL
7	Cardell Williams	QB
7	Jalen Williams	NB
16	Jordan Williams	TE
45	Xavier Williams	DL
10	Jace Wilson	WR
2	Deven Wright	OLB

PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

Dean Abdullah	ab-DOOL-uh	Yebrell Emerson	yeh-BRELL	Grant Meadors	meh-DORS	Jojo Solis	so-LEES
Koa Akui	CO-uh uh-KOO-ee	Jekob Jones	like Jacob	Fata Puloka	FAH-tuh POO-lo-kuh	Joseph Speno	SPEE-no
Hunter Boeddeker	BO-deck-er	Malachi Kindle	mal-uh-KY	Kenndel Riley	KEN-dell	Brodie Tagaloa	tag-uh-LO-uh
Curron Borders	cur-RON	Cal McGough	Mc-GUFF	Alex Rocha	ROW-chuh	Bear Tenney	TIN-ee
Lono Chouteau	LOW-no SHO-to	Anta'Veon McKenzie	an-TAY-vee-on	Jaquail Smith	ja-KWAIL	Pita Vi	PEE-tuh VEE



ROSTER BREAKDOWN

SQUAD BREAKDOWN

True Freshmen.....	24
Redshirt Freshmen.....	8
Sophomores.....	20
Juniors.....	28
Seniors/Graduate.....	31

LETTERMEN RETURNING (34)

Offense (16)	
Curron Borders.....	RB
Ajon Bryant.....	RB
Cade Gretlein.....	OL
Sawyer Hays.....	OL
Kaleb Higgins.....	S
Michael Johnson.....	RB
Davis May.....	OL
Richard McKay.....	OL
Aiden Meek.....	OL
Elijah Ortiz.....	OL
Kenndel Riley.....	OL
Onterio Smith, Jr.....	WR
Jose Soto.....	OL
Brandon Sousa.....	OL
Joseph Speno.....	OL
Bryson Summers.....	OL

Defense (16)	
Koa Akui.....	S
Hunter Boeddeker.....	ILB
Dejuan Butler.....	NB
Josh Cashiola.....	DL
Yebrell Emerson.....	S
Matthew Eskridge II.....	LB
Derek Houston.....	LB
Lamont Johnson-Burrell.....	CB
Jayland McGlothen.....	DL
Anta'Veon McKenzie.....	S
Elias Mullican.....	CB
Jason Oliver.....	CB
Fata Puloka.....	NB
Alex Rocha.....	LB
Xavier Williams.....	DL
Jalen Williams.....	NB

Specialists (2)

Cal McGough.....	P
Mike Melanson.....	P

STARTERS RETURNING (6)

Minimum of six starts in 2024 or 12 career starts

Offense (3)		2024/Career
Sawyer Hays, OL.....	12/12	
Aidan Meek, OL.....	12/21	
Kenndel Riley, OL.....	7/15	

Defense (2)

Josh Cashiola, DL.....	7/7
Elias Mullican, CB.....	10/10

Specialists (1)

Cal McGough, P.....	12/36
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STARTERS LOST (20)

Offense (8)		2024/Career
Carson Conklin, QB.....	10/12	
Jared Gipson, WR.....	12/39	
Anderson Grover, WR.....	10/14	
Coleman Kuntz, TE.....	9/16	
Nathan Mejia, OL.....	0/27	
Kaden Richardson, OL.....	12/18	
Jackson Slater, OL.....	9/44	
Elijah Tau-Tolliver, RB.....	11/14	

Defense (10)

Ben Ahio, DL.....	12/14
Mason Brosseau, DL.....	10/10
Gavin Davis-Smith, S.....	8/27
Nakian Jackson, LB.....	9/9
Murvin Kenion III, S.....	12/12
Will Leota, LB.....	11/11
Brandon Knott, DL.....	6/7
Eian Moore, S.....	7/13
Zelmar Vedder, CB.....	10/12
Colby Warkentin, DL.....	7/7

Specialists (2)

AJ Campos, LS.....	12/38
Zach Schreiner, K.....	12/25

2024 REDSHIRTS (3)

Offense (1)	
Luke Slater.....	OL

Defense (1)

Adam Taylor.....	CB
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Specialists (1)

Adam Johnston.....	LS
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NEWCOMERS (72)

Offense (36)	
Dean Abdullah.....	OL
Sam Adams II.....	RB
Davis Ambuehl.....	TE
Hayden Anderson.....	WR
Jordan Anderson.....	WR
Trey Bass.....	WR
Elias Brown.....	RB
Ernest Campbell.....	WR
Tim Conerly.....	WR
Jamar Curtis.....	RB
Tre Fernandez.....	WR
Jaxon Fresques.....	WR
Drey Garner.....	WR
Rodney Hammond, Jr.....	RB
Damien Henderson II.....	RB
Jordan Herman.....	OL
Elijah Huddle.....	TE
Graysen Lee.....	OL
Jamar Malone.....	QB
Damien McDaniel.....	ATH
Jaxon Moore.....	OL
Tye Nickens.....	WR
Sammy Norris.....	FB
Jaden Rashada.....	QB
Savion Red.....	RB
Dontae Robinson.....	WR
DeAnthony Sheffield.....	OL
Jaquai Smith.....	RB

Luke Sprague.....	QB
Jeremiah Stallworth.....	OL
Logan Tanner.....	TE
Bear Tenney.....	TE
Gavin Thomson.....	WR
Cardel Williams.....	QB
Jordan Williams.....	TE
Jace Wilson.....	WR

Defense (32)

Miles Bailey.....	DL
Nash Burkart.....	S
Jackson Cahoon.....	ILB
Lono Chouteau.....	S
Diego Davis.....	ILB
James Gillespie.....	DL
Dylan Gooden.....	OLB
Diesel Gordon.....	S
Dylan Hampsten.....	DL
Jamal Hood.....	S
Jordan Jefferson.....	DL
KJ Jefferson.....	S
Je'kob Jones.....	ILB
Malachi Kindley.....	DL
Ricky Lee III.....	CB
Syncere Massey.....	DL
Naytel Mitchell.....	S
Oscar Moore.....	LB
Micah Mosely.....	DL
Caleb Reese.....	CB
Kris Ross.....	DL
Brennon Scott.....	DL
Warren Smith Jr.....	CB
Jojo Solis.....	S
Max Susini.....	LB
Melvin Swindle II.....	DL
Brodie Tagalao.....	DL
Mike Taylor.....	ILB
Malik Tullis.....	DL
Pita Vi.....	DL
DeSean Watts.....	DL
Deven Wright.....	DL

Specialists (4)

Hamish Adams.....	P
Joseph Firebaugh.....	K
Connor McDowell.....	LS
Grant Meadors.....	K



POSITIONAL BREAKDOWN

OFFENSE

Offensive Line

51	Joseph Speno (6-3, 279, Jr.)
52	Dean Abdullah (6-4, 295, Sr.)
53	Elijah Ortiz (6-1, 304, Sr.)
62	Kenndel Riley (6-3, 321, Sr.)
63	Graysen Lee (6-6, 280, Fr.)
64	Brandon Sousa (6-4, 307, Jr.)
65	Cade Gretlein (6-4, 294, So.)
66	Giovanni Kovacs (6-4, 300, RFr.)
67	Luke Slater (6-2, 271, RFr.)
68	Davis May (6-4, 339, So.)
70	Jaxon Moore (6-6, 329, Fr.)
71	Bryson Summers (6-5, 312, Jr.)
72	Sawyer Hays (6-6, 295, Sr.)
73	Jose Soto (6-3, 312, RFr.)
74	Aidan Meek (6-5, 300, Sr.)
75	DeAnthony Sheffield (6-4, 310, Jr.)
77	Jeremiah Stallworth (6-6, 315, Fr.)
78	Richard McKay (6-6, 287, RFr.)
79	Jordan Herman (6-8, 346, Jr.)

Tight End

16	Jordan Williams (6-5, 217, Jr.)
19	Logan Tanner (6-3, 229, So.)
85	Elijah Huddle (6-3, 209, Fr.)
86	Davis Ambeuhl (6-7, 260, Jr.)
87	Gavin Nelson (6-4, 232, Sr.)
88	Bear Tenney (6-6, 269, Fr.)

Wide Receiver

3	Jordan Anderson (5-11, 172, RFr.)
8	Tim Conerly (5-9, 157, Sr.)
10	Jace Wilson (6-4, 214, Jr.)
11	Gavin Thomson (6-1, 191, Sr.)
12	Onterio Smith, Jr. (6-2, 188, So.)
13	Ernest Campbell (5-9, 145, RFr.)
14	Drey Garner (6-0, 193, Fr.)
18	Tye Nickens (5-11, 170, Fr.)
21	Hayden Anderson (6-1, 204, Fr.)
80	Trey Bass (5-10, 193, Fr.)
81	Tre Fernandez (6-0, 172, Fr.)
83	Jaxon Fresques (5-7, 169, Fr.)
84	Dontae Robinson (6-5, 213, Jr.)

Running Back

0	Savion Red (5-10, 233, Sr.)
1	Jamar Curtis (5-8, 169, Sr.)
2	Rodney Hammond, Jr. (5-9, 195, Sr.)
4	Damian Henderson II (6-2, 210, So.)
14	Curron Borders (5-7, 197, So.)
22	Jaquail Smith (5-11, 171, Fr.)
23	Elias Brown (6-0, 234, Jr.)
24	Michael Johnson (5-7, 189, Sr.)
28	Sam Adams II (6-2, 224, Sr.)

Fullback

38	Sammy Norris (6-0, 262, Sr.)
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Athlete

9	Damien McDaniel (6-0, 185, RFr.)
17	Ajon Bryant (5-6, 162, RFr.)

Quarterback

5	Jaden Rashada (6-4, 183, So.)
6	Jamar Malone (6-2, 211, Fr.)
7	Cardell Williams (6-2, 181, Jr.)
15	Luke Sprague (6-05, 220, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

Kicker

49	Grant Meadors (5-11, 181, So.)
99	Joseph Firebaugh (6-2, 184, Jr.)

Long Snapper

37	Connor McDowell (6-0, 186, Sr.)
47	Adam Johnston (6-0, 215, So.)

DEFENSE

Defensive Line

3	Brodie Tagaloea (6-5, 288, Jr.)
8	Kris Ross (6-2, 262, Jr.)
9	Malik Tullis (5-11, 294, Jr.)
45	Xavier Williams (6-4, 246, Sr.)
55	Miles Bailey (6-4, 286, Jr.)
56	Dylan Hampsten (6-3, 245, So.)
58	Jayland McGlothen (6-2, 282, So.)
59	DeSean Watts (6-2, 318, So.)
90	Syncere Massey (6-5, 342, Jr.)
91	James Gillespie (6-3, 318, Sr.)
92	Jordan Jefferson (6-2, 308, Sr.)
93	Malachi Kindle (6-0, 330, Fr.)
99	Melvin Swindle II (6-2, 294, Sr.)

Outside Linebackers

2	Deven Wright (6-5, 204, Sr.)
18	Fata Puloka (6-3, 226, So.)
19	Josh Cashiola (6-3, 234, Sr.)
30	Pita Vi (6-2, 237, Jr.)
34	Dylan Gooden (6-3, 220, So.)
94	Micah Mosely (6-4, 235, Fr.)

Inside Linebackers

5	Oscar Moore (6-1, 216, Sr.)
10	Derek Houston (6-1, 231, So.)
14	Brennon Scott (6-1, 242, Sr.)
15	Je'kob Jones (6-0, 222, Sr.)
26	Max Susini (6-2, 215, Fr.)
27	Mike Taylor (6-3, 187, Fr.)
31	Jackson Cahoon (6-1, 215, Fr.)
32	Matthew Eskridge II (6-1, 228, Jr.)
33	Alex Rocha (6-2, 221, Jr.)
35	Hunter Boeddeker (6-0, 218, Jr.)
44	Diego Davis (6-0, 236, Jr.)

Cornerbacks

1	Ricky Lee III (5-10, 162, So.)
6	Warren Smith, Jr. (6-1, 188, So.)
12	Jason Oliver (6-0, 175, Jr.)
20	Adam Taylor (5-10, 164, RFr.)
22	Elias Mullican (6-1, 176, Jr.)
23	Lamont Johnson-Burrell (6-3, 196, Jr.)
39	Jayden Robinson (6-2, 185, Jr.)
40	Caleb Reese (6-0, 185, Fr.)

Safeties

4	Koa Akui (5-10, 188, Jr.)
11	Jamal Hood (6-0, 185, Jr.)
13	Yebrell Emerson (6-2, 195, Jr.)
16	Kaleb Higgins (6-2, 193, Sr.)
17	Anta'Veon McKenzie (6-1, 193, So.)
24	Lono Chouteau (6-4, 178, Fr.)
25	Naytel Mitchell (5-10, 203, Fr.)
28	KJ Jefferson (6-0, 201, Fr.)
38	Diesel Gordon (6-0, 175, So.)
48	Jojo Solis (5-11, 191, Jr.)
97	Nash Burkart (6-1, 165, Fr.)

Nickelbacks

7	Jalen Williams (5-11, 190, Sr.)
21	Dejuan Butler (5-11, 195, Gr.)

Punter

46	Mike Melanson (5-11, 186, Sr.)
91	Cal McGough (6-2, 197, Sr.)
96	Hamish Adams (6-2, 198)

START CHART

Offense	'24	Consecutive Starts	Career
Curron Borders	2	1	2
Cade Gretlein	3	3	3
Sawyer Hays	12	12	12
Aidan Meek	12	20	21
Gavin Nelson	2	---	2
Kenndel Riley	7	---	15
Onterio Smith, Jr.	1	---	1
Jose Soto	1	---	1
Bryson Summers	2	2	2

Defense	'24	Consecutive Starts	Career
Josh Cashiola	7	---	7
Kaleb Higgins	2	---	3
Derek Houston	3	3	3
L. Johnson-Burrell	1	---	1
Anta'Veon McKenzie	3	---	6
Elias Mullican	10	10	10
Fata Puloka	5	5	5

Specialists	'24	Consecutive Starts	Career
Cal McGough	12	12	36

Players Who Started Every Game in '23 and '24

Offense (1): None

Defense (0): None

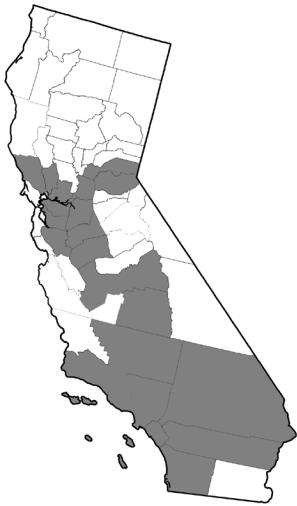
Specialists (2): AJ Campos, Zach Schreiner

Longest Active Starting Streaks

Aidan Meek	20
Sawyer Hays	12
Cal McGough	12



GEOGRAPHICAL ROSTER



CALIFORNIA

Alameda County (3)

Pleasanton: Giovanni Kovacs, Brandon Sousa
Union City: Elijah Ortiz

Contra Costa County (4)

Antioch: Dejuan Butler
Pittsburg: Jadan Rashada, Brodie Tagaloa
Richmond: Warren Smith, Jr.

El Dorado County (1)

El Dorado Hills: Bryson Summers

Fresno County (4)

Clovis: Gavin Nelson
Fresno: Yebrell Emerson, Jakob Jones, DeSean Watts

Kern County (7)

Bakersfield: Cade Gretlein, Davis May, Graysen Lee, Grant Meadors, Aidan Meek, Jason Oliver, Alex Rocha

Los Angeles County (12)

Compton: Damian Henderson II
Inglewood: Jordan Anderson
Lancaster: Jalen Williams
Los Angeles: Davis Ambeuhl, Keith Conley, Malachi Kindle, Jamar Malone, Connor McDowell, DeAnthony Sheffield, Max Susini
Santa Clarita: Dylan Hampsten
Sherman Oaks: Tre Fernandez

Merced County (1)

Gustine: Xavier Williams

Napa County (1)

Napa: Diego Davis

Orange County (1)

Santa Ana: Ajon Bryant

Placer County (4)

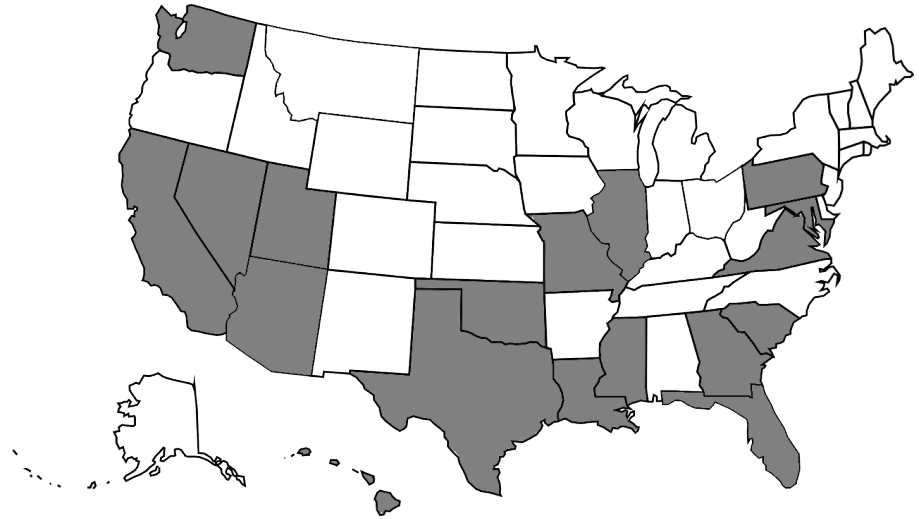
Lincoln: Kennel Riley
Rocklin: Derek Houston, Elias Mullican
Roseville: Jaxon Moore

Riverside County (1)

Riverside: Jordan Williams

Sacramento County (9)

Antelope: Elias Brown
Citrus Heights: Elijah Huddle
Elk Grove: Pita Vi
Sacramento: Dean Abdullah, Curron Borders, Sawyer Hays, Lamont Johnson-Burrell, Fata Puloka, Onterio Smith Jr.

**San Bernardino County (1)**

Adelanto: Jojo Solis

San Diego County (3)

Oceanside: Caleb Reese
San Diego: Joseph Firebaugh, Drey Garner

San Joaquin County (2)

Stockton: Anta'Veon McKenzie, Adam Taylor

Santa Barbara County (1)

Santa Barbara: Hunter Boeddeker

Santa Clara County (4)

Mountain View: Jackson Cahoon
Palo Alto: Jeremiah Stallworth
San Jose: Micah Mosely, Joseph Speno

Solano County (3)

Suisun City: Jayden Richardson
Vallejo: Miles Bailey, Richard McKay

Sonoma County (2)

Petaluma: Tye Nickens
Windsor: Hayden Anderson

Stanislaus County (1)

Ripon: Adam Johnston

Tulare County (1)

Tulare: Jose Soto

Ventura County (1)

Oxnard: Michael Johnson

OUT OF STATE

Arizona (1)

Gilbert: Bear Tenney

Florida (1)

Orlando: Jaquail Smith

Georgia (2)

Atlanta: Ricky Lee III
Fairburn: Malik Tullis

Hawaii (2)

Hilo: Koa Akui
Lihue: Nash Burkart

Illinois (1)

East St. Louis: Mike Taylor

Louisiana (1)

New Orleans: Tim Conerly

Maryland (3)

Columbia: Dylan Gooden
Kettering: Jamal Hood
Waldorf: Jamar Curtis

Mississippi (1)

Southaven: Deven Wright

Missouri (2)

St. Louis: Trey Bass, KJ Jefferson

Nevada (4)

Las Vegas: Matthew Eskridge II, Jayland McGlothen, Mike Melanson, Sammy Norris

Oklahoma (1)

Oklahoma City: Melvin Swindle II

Pennsylvania (3)

Allison Park: Gavin Thomson
Pittsburgh: Naytel Mitchell
Springfield: Luke Sprague

South Carolina (1)

Fort Mill: Jordan Herman

Texas (14)

Arlington: Diesel Gordon
Austin: Kaleb Higgins
Denton: Jace Wilson
Fort Worth: Syncere Massey, Oscar Moore
Grand Prairie: Savion Red
Hitchcock: Damien McDaniel
Houston: Josh Cashiola, Kris Ross, Logan Tanner, Cardell Williams
Navasota: Jordan Jefferson
Refugia: Ernest Campbell

Utah (1)

Layton: Jaxon Fresques

Virginia (2)

Norfolk: Rodney Hammond, Jr.
Woodbridge: James Gillespie

Washington (3)

Bellevue: Luke Slater
Kirkland: Sam Adams II
Tacoma: Dontae Robinson

Australia (2)

Geelong: Cal McGough
Melbourne: Hamish Adams

SEASON OUTLOOK



QUARTERBACKS

- Sacramento State's 2025 roster features a trio of quarterbacks who are all new to the team. In fact, just one of the three were with the team in the spring.
- Cardell Williams shared reps during spring practice after transferring from Tulsa. With the Golden Hurricane, Williams appeared in 15 games over the past two seasons. In 2023, he tied the Tulsa freshman record with 15 touchdowns responsible for as he tossed 10 TDs and led the team with five rushing touchdowns. He combined for 1,186 passing yards at Tulsa while also rushing for 263 yards. Williams was a three-star product out of Westfield HS in Houston, Texas. He led the team to a 33-5 record in his three years as a starter while throwing 90 touchdowns and rushing for 15.
- Jaden Rashada became the highest-profile recruit to commit with Sacramento State when he signed during the spring. Rashada began his collegiate career at Arizona State where he redshirted during the 2023 season. That year, he played in three games for the Sun Devils with starts against Southern Utah, Oklahoma State and Arizona. Rashada transferred to Georgia for 2024 but did not appear in a game for the Bulldogs. A Northern California native, Rashada graduated from Pittsburg HS where he was a four-star recruit and ranked as the No. 7 quarterback in the nation in his class. With the Pirates, he threw for 5,275 yards and 59 touchdowns in his final two years.
- Jamar Malone will come to the team as a true freshman in the fall. Malone was a three-star recruit from 247Sports and a two-star by Rivals coming out of Warren HS in Southern California. He was the highest ranked QB in his recruiting class to sign with an FBS school. Despite being limited to six games as a senior, he threw for 2,423 yards and 27 touchdowns while completing 62.3 percent of his passes over his final two seasons.
- Whoever wins the starting job will become the fourth different quarterback to open the year for the team in the last four seasons. The streak began with Asher O'Hara in 2022 and continued with Carson Camp in 2023 and Kaiden Bennett in 2024. Strangely, none of the previous three opening game starters ended the year as the team's leading passer that season.



RUNNING BACKS

- The Hornets return just two running backs from last season in Currion Borders and Michael Johnson. Borders, a redshirt sophomore, will likely miss the season after suffering a knee injury in the fall. If Borders is excluded, Johnson becomes the team's leading returning rusher having tallied 94 yards a year ago on 12 attempts. While the team may not return a large amount of production, it doesn't mean the cupboard is bare as Sacramento State stocked up with high-caliber backs in the transfer portal.
- Jamar Curtis came to the team after three stellar seasons at Lafayette. Curtis, who has been named the best FCS-to-FCS transfer and the second-best returning back in the FCS during the offseason, was a two-time Walter Payton Award finalist with the Leopards. He rushed for 3,064 yards and scored 37 touchdowns in three seasons. That total included a school-record 1,460 as a sophomore. He followed that effort with 1,139 rushing yards a year ago and was 19th in the FCS with 115.7 all-purpose yards per game.
- Rodney Hammond, Jr., spent the previous four years at Pitt. He began his collegiate career with 504 yards and five touchdowns as a true freshman in 2021. The following year, he ranked second on the team with 460 rushing yards and scored five times. Hammond led the Panthers with 547 rushing yards and scored four touchdowns in 2023 before redshirting in 2024.
- Savion Red has played at Texas and Nevada before transferring to the Hornets during the spring. In 2024, he ranked second for the Wolf Pack with 687 rushing yards and tied for the team lead with eight TDs. He had three 100-yard performances, including a season-high 137 against Oregon State.
- Damian Henderson II will be a sophomore in 2025 after spending the past two seasons at Colorado State. Henderson was a four-star recruit out of Los Alamitos HS where he rushed for 1,744 yards and 23 touchdowns as a senior. At CSU, he redshirted in 2023 and saw action in three games in 2024.
- The team will have added depth with the addition of Washington transfer Sam Adams II, junior college transfer Elias Brown and true freshman Jaquail Smith. Adams played in 31 games with the Huskies and was part of the team which advanced to the national championship game during the 2023 season. Brown was a first-team all-region selection at American River College after compiling 1,147 yards and 16 touchdowns in 10 games. Smith had 1,805 yards and 22 touchdowns as a senior at Jones HS in Orlando, Fla.



SEASON OUTLOOK



WIDE RECEIVERS

- Sacramento State will have the challenge of replacing a trio of receivers who each caught at least 50 passes and combined for 2,246 yards and 21 touchdowns during the 2024 season.
- The only returning receiver on the team is redshirt sophomore Oterrio Smith, Jr., who finished last year with five catches for 29 yards and a touchdown. Smith had a pair of catches in three games including against Nicholls where he had a seven-yard TD.
- The leading candidates to join the rotation at receiver are six transfers who come with a wide range of collegiate experience. Senior Gavin Thomson began his collegiate career at Pitt, transferred to UNLV for the 2023 season and then moved on to Saint Francis in 2024. With the Red Flash, he led the team with 46 receptions, 726 yards and seven touchdowns.
- Tim Conerly also has roots to UNLV, having played for the Rebels in 2023 and 2024 under Brennan Marion. Conerly totaled nine receptions for 110 yards over the two years with the Rebels.
- Jace Wilson will be a junior in 2025 after spending three seasons at UTSA. Wilson caught nine passes for the Roadrunners in 2024, totaling 79 yards. He was a three-star recruit coming out of Guyer HS in Denton, Texas.
- Ajon Bryant and Damien McDaniel are each listed as athletes on the roster and have the ability to play receiver and running back. Bryant redshirted for the Hornets in 2024 after playing in the final four games. McDaniel redshirted at UNLV after seeing action in four games. He was a three-star recruit and first team all-state selection coming out of Hitchcock HS in Texas.
- Jordan Anderson returns to his home state after playing in four games at Oregon State a season ago. Anderson was a four-star recruit at Newport Harbor HS where he had nearly 1,000 receiving yards as a senior. Ernest Campbell redshirted at Texas A&M where he also ran track. Campbell was a four-star recruit from Refugio HS and earned NCAA Div. I All-America honors after running the 100 in 10.02 seconds.
- Dontae Robinson was a junior college all-region selection at Sierra College after catching 63 passes for 771 yards and 10 touchdowns.
- The roster will also feature six true freshmen, including a pair who were with the team in the spring. Hayden Anderson and Jaxon Fresques each took part in spring drills where they took valuable reps. The duo will be joined by Drey Garner, Tye Nickens, Trey Bass and Tre Fernandez.



OFF. LINE/TIGHT ENDS

- Offensive line will be the most experienced unit on that side of the ball as the team returns six student-athletes who have started games in the past. Even with the wealth of returners, the team will have the challenge of filling the void left by All-American Jackson Slater who was selected by the Tennessee Titans in the fifth round of the NFL Draft.
- Aidan Meek is the most experienced of the group of returners having started 21 games in the last two seasons, including all 12 a year ago. Meek started 10 games at right tackle and also made a pair of starts at right guard. He did not allow a sack during the season and played a large for a group which averaged 4.5 rushing yards per attempt.
- Jose Soto was the opening-game starter at right guard before suffering a foot injury midway through the contest at San Jose State which cost him the rest of the season. Now healthy, Soto is expected to return as the starter at the position in 2025.
- Kennedel Riley has played in 24 games, starting 13 in the last three seasons. Riley played both guard positions in 2024 and, according to PFF, did not allow a quarterback hit.
- Sawyer Hays has appeared in 25 consecutive games on the offensive line. Last season, Hays started 11 games at left tackle and one at right tackle.
- Bryson Summers saw action in 2024 — his first with the Hornets. Summers started the final two games at right tackle and did not give up a sack in 223 snaps.
- Cade Gretlein started the last three games of the year at left guard and also has the ability to play center.
- A trio of transfers (Dean Abdullah, Jordan Herman, DeAnthony Sheffield) could work their way into the rotation. Abdullah was with the team during the spring after transferring from San Diego State. The 6-foot-8, 355-pound Herman began his collegiate career at Florida before playing 2024 at Charlotte. Sheffield was an all-region selection at LA Southwest JC.
- The Hornets don't return a tight end who caught a pass for the team a year ago. Gavin Nelson is the only player with experience at Sacramento State as he appeared in four games during his redshirt season. The rest of the unit is comprised of transfers Jordan Williams (Colorado State), Logan Tanner (San Diego State) and Davis Ambeuhl (UNLV) as well as high school recruits Elijah Huddle and Bear Tenney.

SEASON OUTLOOK



DEFENSIVE LINE

- Four players who have contributed on the Hornet defensive line return for the 2025 season. The quartet is led by seniors Josh Cashiola and Xavier Williams. Cashiola has appeared in 20 games over the last two seasons, including starts in all seven of his games a year ago. In 2024, the defensive end tallied 23 tackles, including five for loss and four sacks. He set his season high with six tackles at Fresno State and matched that total against Eastern Washington. Cashiola also led the team with three forced fumbles during the season, including a pair at East Texas A&M.
- Williams missed all of last season after tearing his biceps muscle. That lost proved costly for the team as Williams had appeared in 25 of the team's previous 26 contests. In those two seasons, he was credited with 19 total tackles and played a large part in the team's stout run defense in those seasons.
- Fata Puloka and Jaylan McGlothen each return to the line after debuting up front in 2024. Puloka came to the team as a nickelback out of high school, briefly moved to linebacker and then found a home at defensive end. Puloka played in all 12 games as a redshirt freshman, recording 30 total tackles, including four for loss and 2.5 sacks. He also forced a pair of fumbles and recovered one. McGlothen saw action in six games as a true freshman last season. He ended the season with four tackles against both Cal Poly and UC Davis and tallied 13 stops on the season.
- The revamped front four includes nine players who have FBS experience. The most experienced are Kris Ross and Melvin Swindle II. Ross began his collegiate career at Texas before spending 2024 with Nevada. With the Wolf Pack, he started six games and recorded 29 total tackles. Swindle played at Eastern Michigan alongside fellow transfer Malik Tullis. Swindle had 60 tackles in 35 career games with the Eagles.
- Other transfers include Deven Wright (Texas State), Brodie Tagaloa (Nebraska), Brennon Scott (UNLV), Miles Bailey (Murray State), Dylan Hampsten (San Jose State), Syncere Massey (Texas Tech/Texas Southern), James Gillespie (Middle Tennessee) and Jordan Jefferson (Texas A&M/Kilgore JC).
- The Hornets also return defensive tackle DeSean Watts to the team. Watts redshirted with the Hornets in 2023 before transferring to Fresno City JC where he had 8.5 TFLs and five sacks in 10 games. The other new players are Jordan Atkinson (South Oak Cliff HS (TX)) Pita Vi (Elk Grove HS/Sam Mateo JC), Malachi Kindle (Cathedral HS) and Micah Mosley (Valley Christian HS).



LINEBACKERS

- First team all-Big Sky linebacker Will Leota concluded his career at Sacramento State in 2024 where he led the team with 94 total tackles and 9.5 TFLs. Leota's graduation makes sophomore Derek Houston the team's leading returning tackler. Houston played in 12 games, started the final three, and ended the year with 62 total tackles. The Rocklin, Calif., native had at least one tackle in each game and finished with five or more in six contests. Once in the starting lineup, his production skyrocketed as he had 24 stops.
- Hunter Boeddeker, Alex Rocha and Matthew Eskridge also return to the unit. Boeddeker has seen action in 21 games over the last two seasons with the majority of his time coming on special teams. Rocha was also a standout on special teams as he played in all 12 games during his first active season with the Hornets. He was credited with 14 total tackles, including six solos during the year. Eskridge was a JC All-American while helping lead Riverside JC to a state title in 2023. He redshirted last season after seeing action in four games.
- Jakob Jones brings extensive Big Sky experience to the position. Jones played in 36 games with Cal Poly and was credited with 130 total tackles. Last season, the Fresno, Calif., native played in all 11 games for the Mustangs where he had 44 stops. Dylan Gooden played two years at Maryland following a high school career which saw him ranked as one of the premier defensive linemen in the country.
- Diego Davis joined the team during the spring and quickly became one of the fastest players at the position. Davis started his collegiate career at Stetson where had nine tackles in 2022 and posted 37 in only four games while redshirting in 2023. He then transferred to Santa Rosa JC and earned first team all-NorCal League honors after tallying 84 total tackles, including 10.5 for loss.
- A pair of true freshmen complete the linebackers. Jackson Cahoon prepped at St. Francis HS in Mountain View, Calif. Cahoon was named all-West Catholic Athletic League after concluding the season with 125 total tackles while helping the Crusaders win the Central Coast Section title. Cahoon's father, J.B., played for the Hornets from 1992-94 and was a first team all-American West Conference linebacker. Mike Taylor comes from East St. Louis HS in Illinois. He finished his senior season with 66 total tackles and had at least four stops in all 11 games. Taylor guided the team to a 13-1 overall record and on the Illinois State 6A title.



SEASON OUTLOOK



DEFENSIVE BACKS

- A crowded defensive backfield will see 21 players at cornerback, safety and nickelback. That list includes 10 players who were with the team a year ago and three who have played at the FBS level.
- The Hornets return four players who took snaps at cornerback in 2024. The unit is led by Elias Mullican who started 10 of the team's 12 games. Mullican was named the Big Sky Defensive Player of the Week after a two-interception effort at East Texas A&M. His first pick came just outside the goal line to help preserve a shutout and his second was returned for a 35-yard touchdown. He finished the season with 28 total tackles and had three pass breakups.
- Jason Oliver and Lamont Johnson-Burrell were both regulars in the 2024 rotation at corner. Oliver played in the final six games of the season and concluded the year with eight tackles. Johnson-Burrell made one start in his nine games and was credited with four tackles and a forced fumble.
- Adam Taylor, who redshirted last year, will be joined at the position by transfers Ricky Lee III (UAB) and Warren Smith, Jr. (Washington State) and freshman Caleb Reese. Lee had 20 tackles, two interceptions and two PBUs as a freshman in 2023 for the Blazers. Smith made four tackles in nine games in 2024 for the Cougars.
- Five Hornets return at safety led by Anta'Veon McKenzie. The Stockton, Calif., product recorded 37 tackles in 10 games a year ago. Kaleb Higgins started two games at the position last year before suffering an ankle injury which sidelined him for eight games. He opened the year with eight tackles at San Jose State for his high.
- Jalen Williams, Koa Akui and Yebrell Emerson will all look to work their way into the rotation during the year. Williams had 21 tackles a year ago in 12 games. Akui only appeared in the season opener before an injury kept him out the remainder of the season. Emerson redshirted in his first season with the team. He previously was a two-time all-league selection at Fresno City JC.
- The newcomers include transfers Diesel Gordon (Washington/Butler JC), Oscar Moore (UTEP) and Jamal Hood (Highlands CC). The roster will also feature four true freshmen in Lono Chouteau (Inderkum HS), Naytel Mitchell, KJ Jefferson and Jojo Solis.
- The roster currently has two players listed at nickelback. The only returner is Dejuan Butler who played in all 12 games a year ago. Freshman Nash Burkart comes to the team from Lihue, Hawaii.



SPECIALISTS

- When the Hornets special teams take the field they will have a decidedly different look than last season. Sacramento State's 2025 roster will feature a new kicker, long snapper and primary returners. The only familiar face among the specialists is punter Cal McGough who returns for his third season with the team.
- McGough has averaged 42.15 yards per punt in his career which currently places him third in school history. Last year, he had 48 attempts for an average of 42.2 yards per kick. Seven of those punts went for at least 50 yards, including a long of 65 yards against UC Davis. McGough also helped flipped the field with 15 of his punts caught with a fair catch and only two going into the end zone for a touchback. He landed nearly a third of his efforts (14) inside the opponent 20-yard line.
- A pair of kickers will look to replace all-Big Sky kicker Zach Schreiner. Grant Meadors returns to his homestate after two seasons at Oregon while Joseph Firebaugh comes from UCLA. Meadors appeared in five games over his two seasons. Five of his nine total kickoff attempts went for touchbacks and he was also 5-for-5 in PATs. Coming out of Liberty HS in Bakersfield, Calif., Meadors was a the top-ranked kicker by Chris Sailer Kicking and the No. 9 kicker by 247Sports. As a senior, he made 52-of-54 extra points and had touchbacks on 82 percent of his kickoffs. Firebaugh saw limited action for the Bruins where he made both his PAT attempts.
- Adam Johnston and Connor McDowell are the two long snappers on the roster. Johnston was the team's long snapper in the final three games, preserving his redshirt season. Prior to coming to Sacramento State, he played a season at Modesto JC. McDowell has had stops at Incarnate Word and Angelo State. This past season, he was named first team all-Lone Star Conference.
- One of the biggest questions for the team will come at punt returner. The Hornets don't have a player on the roster who returned a punt for the team in 2024. During the spring, Sacramento State had several players practice at the position.
- The top returning kick returner is Ajon Bryant. The redshirt freshman had six returns for 141 yards (23.50 per return) last season. He had a long of 39 yards at Cal Poly. The only other players who has experience as a kick return for the Hornets are Curron Borders and Michael Johnson.