

Headline: Football Season Preview: Our way, the Butler Way

Sub Head: Upperclassmen leadership sets the tone for the season

Excerpt: "I just hope we can clean up some of the mistakes that we made and continue to emphasize our strengths."



*Butler passed for 242 yards in a 40-3 win over Upper Iowa on Aug. 31st. Photo by Makenna Frias.*

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As the color of the leaves change, one thing remains the same: another season of Butler football is underway. Last season, the [Bulldogs](#) finished with a 7-4 record and placed fourth in the Pioneer Football League (PFL) standings. This season, the Dawgs are picked to finish fourth in the PFL [preseason poll](#), but the team is motivated to prove the poll wrong.

Butler has won four PFL championships, with their last title occurring eleven years ago in 2013. This could be the season where Butler adds another championship to the trophy case.

Junior defensive back [Will Mason](#) was a leader on the Dawgs' defense last year, having a team-high seven pass break-ups. Mason detailed how Butler's mentality differs from their opponents'.

"I think that every single team comes in on a week-to-week basis with a plan, but our initiative to execute better than anybody else and give effort better than anybody else is what makes us better," Mason said. "We prepare hard, and we play even harder. And you know, we plan on beating you because we're better than you, because we execute better than you, point blank, period."

Winning the PFL is easier said than done. Butler will need to beat schools that have dominated the league for years, such as [the University of Dayton](#), [the University of San Diego](#) and [Drake University](#).

Although those schools have achieved more success in the conference, it has not deterred the spirit of the Bulldogs for this upcoming season. Senior running back [Joey Suchy](#) expressed the energy surrounding the locker room.

"I think for the season in general, we are just really excited," Suchy said. "We have a lot of guys who have played a lot of college football, and a lot of guys who this is their first chance to [play] in their role, whether it's traveling or playing for the first time. There's a lot of guys that have something to prove."

The Bulldogs retained three starting offensive linemen: redshirt junior [Adam Dolan](#), redshirt junior [Fabian Gonzales](#) and redshirt senior [Owen Keane](#), who will all make the adjustment for the new starting quarterback a little easier.

During the season opener against [Upper Iowa](#), graduate student [Nick Howard](#) and redshirt sophomore [Reagan Andrew](#) split snaps. Howard previously played at [Dartmouth College](#) and helped lead the team to a win in the [2023 Ivy League Conference Championship](#).

Andrew's first collegiate snaps turned into instant success, throwing for 119 yards, scoring four touchdowns and being awarded PFL Offensive Player of the Week. Head coach [Mike Uremovich](#) outlined what the future holds for the two quarterbacks.

"They are both starting quarterbacks for us," Uremovich said. "They will both play all season."

Over the past few years, the Bulldogs' biggest advantage over the competition has been playing in front of Butler nation at the [Sellick Bowl](#).

"There's no secret to success," said Uremovich. "All the credit goes to the players and how hard they work. We do like playing at home and we really do like playing in front of our fans, but we are going to prepare the same way whether we are playing at home or on the road."

Each team places eleven players on the field who will give the team the best chance of winning. However, successful teams all have the same mentality, regardless of position or status on the depth chart.

"I think [our mentality] is just to win the game in your role [starting roster or practice team]," Suchy said. "And if your role is scout team running back — which is what my role was my first year here — you know it's great you get to go out there and get the best look anyone could get that week in practice. And we're all playing to win the game, every single day, and that's just got to be your mindset, even if you are not going to be on the field much on Saturdays."

Excelling in your role requires determination, skill and most importantly, being available. That availability is represented by not just showing up to practice every day but being available to put the team first and go the extra mile for the team to thrive.

"I genuinely feel like availability is the best ability," Mason said. "That's just always been my motto. Whether you're first string, second string or third string, if you are available all the time, you're gonna get the opportunity to play. If I could preach one thing to anybody out there who wants to be a key player on the field, you should be available and your moments are going to come."

The motto of players being available led to a successful [40-3](#) season-opening win against Upper Iowa at home. Although the Bulldogs got the win, Uremovich thinks there is still work that needs to be done.

"I just hope we can clean up some of the mistakes that we made and continue to emphasize our strengths," said Uremovich. "A lot of guys did a lot of good things in that game and then there's some mistakes that I think that we can get off the tape."

Butler played to their strengths and improved to 2-0 against [Murray State](#). Howard ran all over the Racers defense, rushing for 85 yards and two touchdowns. Redshirt sophomore [Ryan Short](#) secured the win for the Bulldogs by nailing a 22-yard field goal with nine seconds remaining.

The Dawgs are tied for first in the PFL, but the real test is still ahead. Butler has plenty of competition to beat if they are going to have any chance at winning the conference. The Bulldogs will have to win key games in October, taking on [Drake](#), [Dayton](#) and [Davidson](#). Playing against the defending league champions and two tough teams on the road will not be a walk in the park. For Suchy and the rest of the Butler team, they only have hardware on their mind.

"The only goal I have is to win the PFL Championship," Suchy said.