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SEASON PREVIEW: ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

By Chad Rader, 810 Varsity, 07/30/21, 7:00PM CDT

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New faces will lead Saints in 2021



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If the St. Thomas Aquinas PA announcer - or even Randy Dreiling - slips a couple times this year, well, don't say we didn't tell you.

The Saints return a handful of seniors along with talented juniors and sophomores in 2021. But Aquinas will miss one familiar go-to player from the past few years.

"I asked people 'How's Tank going to be this year?'" joked the Saints head coach about long-time star running back Tank Young. "They said 'He's gone, Coach'. After 12 years here, he's gone."

All joking aside, Young takes his 5,700+ careers yards and 82 career rushing TDs to Northwest Missouri State, but the Saints do return a backfield with playing time in 2020.

Taking carries this year in the flexbone offense will be junior Sean Carroll, who rushed for 758 yards and seven touchdowns on 141 carries as a sophomore. Also in the committee will be juniors Jeremiah Penney and Jack Forge, and sophomore Grant Kelley, a transfer from Hutchinson.

Maxxwell Ford (6-foot-3, 210) returns at quarterback, after stepping in as a sophomore for injured starter Blake Anderson – one of five offensive starters suffering injuries las year. Ford completed 20-of-65 passes for 426 yards and two touchdowns, while running for 140 yards and two scores. "He got better as the year went along, and has got bigger this offseason, which should help him as well," Dreiling said.



Maxxwell Ford will take the helm at quarterback again in his junior season. (Photo: Michelle Gress)

Up front, the Saints will be led on the offensive line by senior Michael Luchtefeld (6-foot-1, 200).

"Everything depends on the O-line, particularly with our system," Dreiling said. "How fast the line improves will be a key to our success this year." St. Thomas Aquinas returns just five seniors on offense, including wide receiver Evan Kammerer (285 yards, 4 TDs), who played only four games due to injuries, and tight end AJ Marozas (6-foot-1, 200).



Wideout Evan Kammerer returns after missing most of 2020 due to injuries. (Photo: Michelle Gress)

The Saints also return just three seniors on defense, but one being one of the area's top defensive linemen in tackle Jalen Marshall (6-foot-5, 270), who's committed to Mizzou. The end will be Sean Brough, returning from a leg injury, and junior Sa'o Siavi'i (6-foot-1, 230), a three-year starter already. Sophomore Kian Payne also will start and "be a monster" ahead in future years.

At linebacker, sophomore Wyatt Porter (5-foot-9, 180) and junior Conor Ellis (6-0 205) will lead the corps.

In the secondary, senior Will Gavin (6-foot-1, 165) shifts from safety to cornerback. Joining Gavin in the secondary will be sophomore Dillon Marshall (6-foot-1, 175), sophomore Blake O'Brien, junior Jacob Bittner, and senior MJ Overstreet, who moves in from Blue Springs.

"We'll need to win some games early and get momentum ahead this year, as well as future years with our young kids," Dreiling said.

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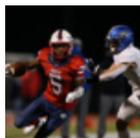
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