

2009 CIS FOOTBALL TEAM PREVIEW: UNIVERSITY OF REGINA

2008 regular season record: 5-3

2008 regular season standings: 3rd, Canada West

2008 playoff record: 0-1

2008 playoff finish: *Lost 24-17 to Calgary in the Canada West semifinals*

General Write-Up:

The University of Regina Rams lost a heartbreaking 24-17 road decision to the Calgary Dinos last year, which put an end to a season in which they finished in third place in the conference with a 5-3 record. The Rams started off the season with consecutive losses to Manitoba and Saskatchewan, but reeled off victories in five of their next six conference games to qualify for the playoffs.

This season, the Rams will look markedly different. The biggest change will be under centre, as quarterback Teale Orban finished off his stellar five-season career as the conference's all-time leader in touchdown passes, pass completions, and passing yards. Replacing him will be Marc Mueller, who has backed up Orban for the past two seasons. Mueller will have essentially the same receiving corps as Orban, as slotback Chad Goldie is the only starting receiver gone from last year. Andrew Busby, a prolific wide receiver with the Saskatoon Hilltops, is expected to give Mueller another big target on the outside.

On defence, the Rams lose seven starters from last year – including all five members of the backfield. The new-look backfield will see Steve Famulak, Mike Kerr, Kirby Kezama, Dan Knaus, Jeff Lukomski, Jamir Walker, and Matt Yausie all battling for playing time. The defence will be anchored by the linebackers, as Bruce Anderson, Thomas Irving, and Canada West all-star Brandon Ganne all had strong seasons this year and will return this season.

The Rams open up their 2009 season with a home game against Manitoba on Sept. 4.

Quote from head coach:

"We've had a great camp so far. Our players have come prepared both physically and technically. It's our challenge to help them maintain their focus as we move towards our first game. Like every team in this conference, we have a very tough schedule. Canada West is such a tough, physical conference and there are no easy games. We need to be ready for every game, every quarter, and every play.

Head Coach: Frank McCrystal

- Number of seasons as head coach with team (including 2009): 11
- Number of seasons as head coach in CIS (including 2009): (same as above)
- Career regular season record with team: 36-43-1
- Career overall record with team (reg. season & playoffs only): 42-50-1

OFFENCE

Key returning players:

WR/SB Jordan Sisco (4th year) - Named a Canada West all-star in 2008 despite missing the first two games of the season due to a spleen injury ... started six of the team's eight regular season games at wide receiver ... led the team and tied for second in Canada West with four touchdowns scored ... tied for the team lead with three touchdown catches ... finished second on the team with 343 receiving yards

RB Graham Mosiondz (4th year) – Missed entire 2008 season due to injury ... had 87 carries for 483 yards and two touchdowns during the 2007 season ... ranks second on the Rams' all-time career list in both rushing yardage (1523) and carries (294).

WR Mark McConkey (2nd year) - Started all eight regular season games at wide receiver in 2008, his first season of eligibility ... tied for second on the team with 28 catches ... finished third on the team with 338 receiving yards ... caught two touchdown passes last season.

FB Sheldon Tillotson (5th year) – Started all eight regular season games at fullback for the Rams ... tied for second on the team with 28 receptions ... finished fourth on the team with 250 receiving yards.

Key recruits (or newcomers: transfers):

WR Andrew Busby (Saskatoon Hilltops) – Will be in his fourth year of eligibility ... named a Prairie Football Conference all-star in each of his five years as a Hilltop ... was a four-time Canadian Junior Football League All-Canadian ... holds the CJFL all-time record for career receptions (185) ... ended up with 2839 receiving yards over his five-season Hilltop career.

RB Cale Inglis (Acadia University) – Will be in his fourth year of eligibility ... played three seasons for Acadia before coming to the U of R ... rushed 258 times for 1307 yards (5.1 yards per carry) and scored five rushing touchdowns over his three seasons with the Axemen ... best season came in 2006, when he had 119 rushes for 653 yards and four touchdowns and was named an Atlantic University Sport all-star.

OL Chris Mercer (Saskatoon Hilltops) – Will be in his second year of eligibility ... spent the 2006, 2007, and 2008 seasons with the Saskatoon Hilltops before coming to the U of R ... won the Canadian Bowl with the Hilltops in 2007 and Prairie Football Conference championships in both 2007 and 2008 ... named a CJFL All-Canadian, the PFC's Outstanding Offensive Lineman, and a PFC all-star following the 2008 season.

Key losses:

QB Teale Orban
RB Luke Derkson
SB Chad Goldie
RG Nick Hutchins
LT Ryan Ackerman

DEFENCE

Key returning players:

LB Brandon Ganne (5th year) - Started all eight regular season games at strong-side linebacker ... named a Canada West all-star ... registered a Canada West-leading 58 tackles (40 solo, 36 assisted) ... tied for the team lead with three sacks ... 7.5 tackles for loss ... had one interception and broke up two passes.

LB Bruce Anderson (4th year) - Started all eight regular season games at middle linebacker ... finished second in the conference with 46 tackles (29 unassisted, 34 assisted) ... had five tackles for loss ... tied Brandon Ganne and Stan Van Sichem for the team lead in sacks (3) ... led the Rams in fumble recoveries (3).

LB Thomas Irving (5th year) - Started all eight regular season games at weak-side linebacker ... was third on the team with 38 tackles (27 solo, 22 assisted) ... had 5.5 tackles for loss ... had 1.5 sacks ... also had two pass breakups and a forced fumble.

DE Mike Picken (5th year) - Started all eight regular season games for the Rams at defensive end ... had 21.5 tackles (13 solo, 17 assisted) ... had a team-leading six pass breakups ... had two fumble recoveries ... had one sack and 4.5 tackles for loss.

Key recruits (or newcomers: transfers):

DB Matt Yausie – Will be in his fourth season of eligibility ... played with the Saskatoon Hilltops (PFC) from 2001 to 2005 ... was a three-time CJFL All-Canadian and was named the CJFL's Outstanding Defensive Player in 2004 ... also played in 2006 and 2007 with the University of Saskatchewan Huskies.

DB Jeff Lukomski – Will be in his fourth season of eligibility ... hasn't played competitive football since graduating from Archbishop M.C. O'Neill HS in 2005 ... has spent the past four seasons (one as a redshirt) as a shooting guard with the U of R's men's basketball team.

Key losses:

DE Stan Van Sichem
CB Tamon George
HB Darren Geddert
DT Paul McDill
HB Aadon Fieger
CB Andrew Rumbaugh
S Charlie McCrystal