

Houston Cougars Football Preview

Written by Yolande Y. Lezine, Sports Editor
Tuesday, 21 August 2012 16:50



Despite the loss of several key players and a lot of coaches, first-year head coach Tony Levine has high expectations for the Houston Cougars football team.

The Kevin Sumlin era is in the books and now starts the Tony Levine era. It started off pretty good as he started a new tradition and invited all of the Cougars football team families for a meal, prior to the annual "Fan Appreciation Day" held in the Alumni Center. It worked too, for close to 600 people showed up for this first-time event.

There will be a lot of first for the Cougars. There's a new starting quarterback in David Piland, another crop of unproven receivers in Daniel Spencer, Ronnie Williams, Dewayne Peace, Isiah Sweeney, and a new offensive coaching staff, led by new coordinator Mike Nesbitt.

Houston finished 13-1 last year, but the talent is there to have the same success or more this season. Yes, Piland has the task of replacing the legendary NCAA record-breaker in Case Keenum; however, he should be fine.

As a redshirt freshman in 2011, Piland threw for 2,641 yards and 24 touchdowns with 14 interceptions, while completing passes at 58.3 percent. He gained the confidence of first-year coach Levine, coach Nesbitt, and the rest of the Cougars offensive staff early in the spring practice, showing confidence, poise and command that convinced the staff to name him the starter going into the fall.

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Dual-threat running back, Charles Sims is looking to pick up where he left off last season, averaging more than 100 all-purpose yards per game in 2011. Sims is a rushing and receiving threat from Westbury High School. He had 1,396 all-purpose yards last season, and he's definitely one of the best running backs in Texas right now.

The Cougars will open the season on Saturday, September 1st against Texas State Bobcats. This game will be featured as "Heroes Day". Local citizens who make significant differences in the lives of others will be honored in pregame ceremonies and throughout the game.

Heroes Day will be the first of many exciting Houston Football promotions throughout the season as the Cougars play their last season in the old Robertson Stadium.

The team will wear their new-look helmets during the 2012 season. The helmets feature a truer red color with a metallic base that comes through the red and gives it the color change from previous seasons. They are painted by Hydro Graphics Inc., through Riddell.