

# FIGHTING ILLINI

## FOOTBALL



**ILLINOIS FIGHTING ILLINI (2-5, 1-3) vs. #7 PENN STATE NITTANY LIONS (5-1, 2-1)**

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 // 11 a.m. CT // ABC  
University Park, Pa. // Beaver Stadium



### GAME DAY INFO

#### TV | ABC

- » Bob Wischusen (play-by-play), Dan Orlovsky (analyst), and Kris Budden (sideline)

#### RADIO | Busey Bank Illini Sports Network

- » Brian Barnhart (play-by-play), Martin O'Donnell (analyst), Michael Martin (sideline), and Steve Kelly (pregame/halftime/postgame)
- » The broadcast can be heard live on **TuneIn** online radio, **Sirius, XM, SiriusXM Internet**, and at **FightingIllini.com**.



#### GAME DAY

- » [FightingIllini.com/gameday](http://FightingIllini.com/gameday)

#### SOCIAL MEDIA

- » Twitter: @IlliniFootball
- » Instagram: @IlliniFootball
- » Facebook: /IlliniFootball

#### ALL-TIME SERIES vs. PENN STATE

**Series:** Illinois trails, 5-20

**Last:** Penn State 56, Illinois 21 (12/19/2020)

**Streak:** Penn State W3

**at Penn State:** Illinois trails, 1-10

### ILLINOIS FIGHTING ILLINI (2-5, 1-3)

Aug. 28	Nebraska	W, 30-22
Sept. 4	UTSA	L, 30-37
Sept. 11	at Virginia	L, 14-42
Sept. 17	Maryland	L, 17-20
Sept. 25	at Purdue	L, 9-13
Oct. 2	Charlotte	W, 24-14
Oct. 9	Wisconsin	L, 0-24
Oct. 23	at #7 Penn State	11 a.m. CT (ABC)
Oct. 30	Rutgers	TBA
Nov. 6	at Minnesota	TBA
Nov. 20	at #11 Iowa	TBA
Nov. 27	Northwestern	TBA
Dec. 4	Big Ten Championship	7 p.m. CT (FOX)

Rankings are AP poll

### Illini Return to Penn State

- Illinois will travel to Happy Valley for the second straight year after ending the 2020 season at Penn State on Dec. 19, the day the Illini announced Bret Bielema as head coach.
- Bielema attended last year's game at Penn State before flying to Champaign the following day and speaking to the Illini team for the first time on Dec. 20. Bielema's introductory press conference was the following Monday (Dec. 21).
- Illinois will play its first game against a top-10 opponent since beating No. 6 Wisconsin, 24-23, on Oct. 19, 2019 in one of the biggest upsets in Big Ten history.

### Defense Steps Up

- Illinois has held opponents to 24 points or fewer in four straight games for the first time since October 2011 against Indiana, Ohio State, Purdue, and Penn State. Last year's Illini team allowed 24 points or fewer twice in eight games.
- Illinois is fifth in the nation and leads the Big Ten in fumbles recovered (8).
- Illinois is ninth in the nation and second in the Big Ten in turnover margin (+1.14).
- Illinois is 13th in the nation and second in the Big Ten in takeaways (13).

### Ground Game

- Illinois has had two record-book worthy performances from running backs this season with Chase Brown rushing for 257 yards against Charlotte and Josh McCray going for 156 at Purdue.
- Brown rushed for a career-high 257 yards against Charlotte and tied his career-high with two rushing touchdowns, giving him three TDs on the season and five for his career. Brown's 257 yards were the fourth-most in a single game in program history.
- Brown's 257 yards are the fourth-most by a running back in college football this season. Only LSU's Tyrion Davis-Price (287 vs. Florida), Ohio State's TreVeyon Henderson (277 vs. Tulsa), and Michigan State's Kenneth Walker III (264 vs. Northwestern) have had more in a game this season.
- Brown's 257 yards were the most by a RB coached by Bret Bielema in his 13 years as a head coach.
- Brown had 200 yards after contact against Charlotte according to PFF, the most yards after contact in all of college football in Week 5 and second-most yards after contact in a game this season (Michigan State's Kenneth Walker III, 206 after contact vs. Northwestern).
- Brown's first TD against Charlotte gave the Illini a 17-14 lead in the third quarter. He carried the ball six times for 72 yards on the drive which covered 94 yards overall, Illinois' longest drive of the season by yards.
- Brown's second TD against Charlotte, an 80-yard score, came on the first play of the ensuing Illini possession and gave Illinois a 24-14 lead as time expired in the third quarter. The 80-yard scoring run tied for the 10th-longest run in Illinois program history.
- Josh McCray ran for a career-best 156 yards on 24 carries against Purdue 9/25/21. It was the fifth-most rushing yards by a true freshman in program history, and the most by a true freshman running back since Ke'Shawn Vaughn recorded 180 yards at Purdue 11/7/2015.
- McCray had 144 yards after contact at Purdue according to PFF, the second-most yards after contact in Week 4 and tied for the 16th-most yards after contact in a game this season.
- McCray's 156 rushing yards at Purdue are the second most by a true freshman this season (Ohio State's TreVeyon Henderson, 277 vs. Tulsa).
- McCray's 156 rushing yards at Purdue are the most by a true freshman in a road game this year.
- McCray became the first true freshman to start at running back for the Illini since Ra'Von Bonner at Minnesota 10/21/2017. Bonner and Mike Epstein each started three games as true freshmen during the 2017 season.

### Lowe, Palczewski One Away From Starts Record

- Illinois offensive tackles Vederian Lowe and Alex Palczewski are approaching the Illini record for career starts. With a start against Penn State, they both would tie the record for career starts in Illini history (48) currently held by QB Nathan Scheelhaase (2010-13), C Ryan McDonald (2005-08), and OL Tim Simpson (1988-91).

## QUICK FACTS

## UNIVERSITY INFORMATION

**Location:** Urbana-Champaign (135,000)  
**Founded:** 1867  
**Enrollment:** 56,299  
**Colors:** Orange & Blue  
**Nickname:** Fighting Illini  
**Conference:** Big Ten (West Division)  
**President:** Timothy L. Killeen  
**Chancellor:** Robert J. Jones  
**Director of Athletics:** Josh Whitman  
**Stadium:** Memorial Stadium (FieldTurf – 60,670)

## COACHING STAFF

**Head Coach:** Bret Bielema (First season at Illinois)  
**Assistant Coaches:**

**Ryan Walters:** Defensive Coordinator  
**Tony Petersen:** Offensive Coordinator/Quarterbacks  
**George McDonald:** Asst. Head Coach/Wide Receivers  
**Kevin Kane:** Assoc. Head Coach/Outside Linebackers  
**Bart Miller:** Offensive Line  
**Andy Buh:** Linebackers  
**Terrance Jamison:** Defensive Line  
**Aaron Henry:** Defensive Backs  
**Ben Miller:** Special Teams Coordinator/Tight Ends  
**Cory Patterson:** Running Backs

## FOOTBALL INFORMATION

**2020 Record:** 2-6, 2-6 (7th Big Ten West Division)

**Letterwinners Returning/Lost:** 44/6

Offense Letterwinners Returning/Lost: 25/3

Defense Letterwinners Returning/Lost: 16/3

Special Teams Letterwinners Returning/Lost: 3/0

**Starters Returning/Lost:** 18/4

Offense Starters Returning/Lost: 9/2

Defense Starters Returning/Lost: 9/2

**All-Time Record (Years):** 614-606-51 (131) entering 2021

**All-Time Big Ten (Years):** 348-444-32 (125) entering 2021

**Memorial Stadium (Years):** 276-246-14 (98) entering 2021

**Big Ten Championships (Last):** 15 (2001)

**National Championships (Last):** 5 (1951)

**Bowl Appearances (Last):** 19 (2019 Redbox Bowl)

## ATHLETICS COMMUNICATION

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**FIGHTINGILLINI.COM**

## COLLEGEPRESSBOX.COM

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## TEAM NOTES

## Hansen Approaches Illini Record

- With two forced fumbles at Virginia, LB Jake Hansen moved within one of tying the Illinois career record. Hansen has 12 career forced fumbles, one behind Simeon Rice's 13 forced fumbles.
- Hansen passed Whitney Mercilus (11 career forced fumbles) for second place on Illinois' all-time career list.
- Hansen has more career forced fumbles than any other active player in the nation.
- Hansen's 12 forced fumbles are tied for the sixth-most in Big Ten history. The conference record is 15, set by Wisconsin's Chris Borland from 2009-13.

## Offensive Line Notes

- Doug Kramer is the No. 30 graded center in the nation according to PFF (69.0) (min. 300 snaps). Kramer has the No. 24 run blocking grade in the nation among centers (72.8).
- Vederian Lowe is the No. 28 graded tackle in the nation according to PFF (76.9) (min. 300 snaps). Lowe was the highest graded offensive lineman in the nation in Week 5 against Charlotte (93.7).
- Alex Palczewski is the No. 58 graded tackle in the nation according to PFF (72.4) (min. 300 snaps). Palczewski has the No. 15 run blocking grade in the nation among tackles (85.2).

## True Freshman Starters

- Josh McCray became the first true freshman to start at RB for the Illini since Ra'Von Bonner at Minnesota (10/21/2017) when he started at Purdue 9/25/21. Bonner and Mike Epstein each started three games as freshmen during the 2017 season. McCray ran for a career-most 156 yards on 24 carries against the Boilermakers.
- Freshman WR Pat Bryant also earned the first of his Illini career at Purdue then started again against Charlotte. Bryant is the 15th Illini in program history to start multiple games at wide receiver as a true freshman.
- The combination of Bryant and RB Josh McCray starting at Purdue marked the first time that the Illini offense has started two true freshman since QB M.J. Rivers and WR Carlos Sandy started against Penn State (9/21/18). Bryant also made the most of his opportunity, recording 25 yards on three receptions, both career-best totals.
- McCray became the first true freshman running back to score a touchdown for Illinois since Ra'Von Bonner (at Minnesota, 10/21/2017) when he scored against Maryland.

## Quarterbacks Turned Wide Receivers

- Isaiah Williams and Deuce Spann have both transitioned from quarterback to wide receiver in 2021 and have become Illinois' top two leading receivers.
- Isaiah Williams leads the team in receptions (32) and receiving yards (298).
- Isaiah Williams is tied for fifth in the nation and leads the Big Ten in receptions among freshmen (32).
- Isaiah Williams is 11th in the Big Ten in receptions per game (4.6).
- Isaiah Williams is 19th in the Big Ten in receiving yards (298).
- Isaiah Williams led the Illini with eight catches for 101 yards against UTSA, his first career 100-yard receiving game. Williams was the first Illini with 100+ receiving yards since Josh Imatorbhebhe had 178 yards on Nov. 9, 2019 at Michigan State.
- Deuce Spann is second on the team in receiving yards (117), second on the team in receiving touchdowns (2), and leads the team in yards per catch (29.25).
- Deuce Spann has the No. 29 receiving grade in the nation according to PFF (84.4) with a minimum of five targets. He has six targets and four receptions for 117 yards and two touchdowns.
- Two of Deuce Spann's four catches have been 30+-yard touchdowns: 31-yard TD against UTSA and a 33-yard TD against Virginia.

# TEAM NOTES

## Carney on a Roll

- Illinois OLB Owen Carney Jr. has 4.5 sacks in his last four games.
- Carney is tied for sixth in the Big Ten in sacks (4.5).
- Carney has 14.0 career sacks, 1.0 away from Illinois' all-time career top 10 list.

## Kerby's Emergence

- Kerby Joseph is the only player in the nation with 3+ interceptions and 3+ fumble recoveries.
- Joseph is tied for the national lead in fumble recoveries (Lorenzo Dantzler, UTSA).
- Joseph is one of only four Illini since 1971 to record 3+ interceptions and 3+ fumble recoveries in a single season.
- Joseph is one of only three Big Ten players since 2016 to record 3+ interceptions and 3+ fumble recoveries in a single season.
- Joseph's three fumble recoveries are tied for the 10th-most in Illinois history (stat since 1971).
- Joseph has either an interception or a fumble recovery in five straight games.

## Special Teams Notes

- Illinois is eighth in the nation in net punting (44.10).
- Illinois is seventh in the nation in kickoff return defense (15.0).
- P Blake Hayes boomed a career-long 80-yard punt early in the second quarter against Purdue 9/25/21. It is tied for the seventh-longest punt in program history (Brett Larson, 80 yards vs. Arizona, 9/16/1995) and is the longest since Ryan Tabloff's 85-yarder vs. Purdue (10/25/1997).
- K James McCourt hit two field goals from 50+ yards against UTSA, giving him six for his Illini career and moving him past former teammate Chase McLaughlin (2014-18) for the Illini career record. McCourt became the first Illini to hit two field goals from 50+ yards in a single game, then added to his own record with a 51-yard field goal at Purdue 9/25/21.

## (Super) Seniors

- Illinois has 41 seniors, including 21 super seniors who received an extra year due to COVID-19.
- Illinois' 21 super seniors are the most in Power-5.
- Illinois' 20 other seniors still have one year of eligibility remaining following this season - if they choose to use it - and are listed as juniors on the roster.
- The Fighting Illini roster features 28 student-athletes that already earned bachelor's degrees, the most of any team in the nation.
- Illinois returned 10 four-time letterwinners, tied for the second-most in the nation (Toledo, USC) behind only Ball State (11).
- Illinois returned 21 of the 26 student-athletes listed as seniors on the 2020 roster.
- Illinois returned 18 scholarship seniors from last year's roster, the most of any Power-5 team.

## 2021 Captains

- Illinois' six captains - Tony Adams, Owen Carney Jr., Jake Hansen, Blake Hayes, Doug Kramer, and Vederian Lowe - are all super seniors. Hansen, Hayes, and Kramer are the first three-time captains in Illinois program history.

## All-Big Ten Returners

- Illinois has 11 student-athletes who have earned All-Big Ten recognition (top award listed).
  - » RB Chase Brown » 2020 All-Big Ten third team
  - » DB Sydney Brown » 2019 All-Big Ten third team
  - » OLB Owen Carney » 2020 All-Big Ten second team
  - » RB Mike Epstein » 2020 All-Big Ten honorable mention
  - » LB Jake Hansen » 2020 All-Big Ten second team
  - » P Blake Hayes » 2019 Big Ten Punter of the Year
  - » C Doug Kramer » 2020 All-Big Ten honorable mention
  - » OT Vederian Lowe » 2020 All-Big Ten honorable mention
  - » K James McCourt » 2020 All-Big Ten honorable mention
  - » DT Roderick Perry II » 2020 All-Big Ten honorable mention
  - » OT Alex Palczewski » 2019 All-Big Ten third team

## CAREER STARTS

PLAYER	'21	'20	'19	'18	'17	'16	TOT
Lowe, Vederian	7	8	13	12	7	--	47
Palczewski, Alex	7	4	13	12	11	--	47
Kramer, Doug	6	5	12	12	8	--	43
Hansen, Jake	5	8	9	12	--	1	35
Brown, Sydney	7	6	10	10	--	--	33
Adams, Tony	6	6	10	7	2	--	31
Carney Jr., Owen	7	8	0	8	0	--	23
Peters, Brandon	5	5	11	--	--	--	21
Barker, Daniel	4	5	8	3	--	--	20
Martin, Jartavius	5	2	5	8	--	--	20
Gay, Isaiah	4	3	5	3	2	--	17
Woods, Jamal	1	3	5	4	4	--	16
Tolson, Khalan	4	6	4	0	--	--	14
Witherspoon, Devon	5	6	3	--	--	--	14
Navarro, Donny	2	3	6	--	--	--	11
Perry, Roderick	5	6	--	--	--	--	11
Brown, Chase	4	6	0	0	--	--	10
Epstein, Mike	1	3	0	2	3	--	9
Washington, Casey	3	1	5	--	--	--	9
Newton, Jer'Zhan	6	3	--	--	--	--	9
Pearl, Julian	5	4	--	--	--	--	9
Ford, Luke	7	2	--	--	--	--	9
Brown, Verdis	0	8	0	--	--	--	8
Coleman, Seth	3	4	0	--	--	--	7
Barnes, Tarique	5	2	0	--	--	--	7
Hightower, Brian	0	7	--	--	--	--	7
Joseph, Kerby	5	0	2	0	--	--	7
Williams, Isaiah	3	4	--	--	--	--	7
Smith, Derrick	2	4	--	--	--	--	6
Marchese, Michael	0	2	0	3	0	--	5
Pihlstrom, Alex	4	2	0	--	--	--	6
Jeresaty, Blake	4	--	--	--	--	--	4
Sandy, Carlos	3	0	0	1	--	--	4
Robinson, Matt	--	1	2	0	--	--	3
Badovinac, Jack	3	--	--	--	--	--	3
Avery, Calvin	0	2	--	--	--	--	2
Barnes, Bryce	0	2	--	--	--	--	2
Beason, Marquez	--	2	--	--	--	--	2
Bryant, Pat	2	--	--	--	--	--	2
Campbell, Dalevon	1	1	0	--	--	--	2
Nicholson, Tahveon	2	--	--	--	--	--	2
Randolph, Keith	2	0	0	--	--	--	2
Reiman, Tip	2	0	--	--	--	--	2
Sitkowski, Artur	2	--	--	--	--	--	2
Hart, Calvin	1	--	--	--	--	--	1
McCray, Josh	1	--	--	--	--	--	1
McEachern, Alec	1	0	0	0	--	--	1
Norwood, Jakari	1	0	0	0	--	--	1
Pate, Deon	0	0	0	1	--	--	1
Slaughter, Jordyn	0	1	--	--	--	--	1
Smith, Kendall	1	0	0	0	--	--	1
Taylor, Coran	0	1	0	--	--	--	1

-- = Redshirted/did not play/not on squad; 0 = Played, didn't start

## 2021 ILLINOIS FOOTBALL ROSTER

NO.	NAME	POS.	HT.	WT.	ELIG.*	HOMETOWN/LAST SCHOOL
0	Josh McCray	RB	6-1	240	Fr.	Enterprise, Ala./Enterprise
1	Kionte Curry	DB	6-0	195	Fr.	Mims, Fla./Cocoa
1	Isaiah Williams	WR	5-10	180	R-Fr.	St. Louis, Mo./Trinity Catholic
2	Chase Brown	RB	5-11	205	So.	London, Ontario/Western Michigan
2	Daniel Edwards	DB	5-11	160	Fr.	Winter Park, Fla./Winter Park
3	Jakari Norwood	RB	5-10	185	So.	Pompano Beach, Fla./Deerfield Beach
3	DD Snyder II	DB	6-0	175	Fr.	Tampa, Fla./Tampa Catholic
4	KhMari Thompson	WR	6-1	210	So.	Lawrenceville, Ga./Central Gwinnett
4	Derrick Smith	DB	6-2	220	Jr.	Jacksonville, Fla./Miami (Fla.)
5	Caleb Griffin	K/WR	6-3	225	So.	Danville, Ill./Danville
5	Calvin Hart Jr.	LB	6-1	230	So.	Fort Lauderdale, Fla./American Heritage/North Carolina State
6	Tony Adams	DB	6-0	205	Sr.	Belleville, Ill./St. Louis University HS
6	Deuce Spann	WR	6-4	195	R-Fr.	St. Petersburg, Fla./Lakewood
7	Brian Hightower	WR	6-3	215	Jr.	Los Angeles, Calif./IMG Academy (Fla.)/Miami (Fla.)
7	Kendall Smith	DB	6-1	200	Sr.	Bolingbrook, Ill./Bolingbrook
8	Jafar Armstrong	WR	6-1	220	Jr.	Lee's Summit, Mo./Bishop Miege/Notre Dame
8	Eddie Smith	DB	6-0	200	So.	Slidell, La./Salmen/Alabama
9	Artur Sitkowski	QB	6-5	225	So.	Old Bridge, N.J./IMG Academy (Fla.)/Rutgers
9	Coran Taylor	DB	6-2	200	So.	Peoria, Ill./Peoria
10	Desmond Dan Jr.	WR	6-3	195	Sr.	Checotah, Okla./Checotah/New Mexico State
10	Tahveon Nicholson	DB	5-11	175	R-Fr.	Jacksonville, Fla./Lee
11	Carlos Sandy	WR	5-9	185	So.	Dania Beach, Fla./Cardinal Gibbons
12	Matt Robinson	QB	6-1	190	So.	San Clemente, Calif./J Serra Catholic
13	Pat Bryant	WR	6-3	195	Fr.	Jacksonville, Fla./Atlantic Coast
14	Blake Hayes	P	6-6	225	Sr.	Melbourne, Australia/Brighton
14	Casey Washington	WR	6-2	190	So.	Round Rock, Texas/Pflugerville
15	Prince Green	DB	6-3	205	Fr.	Griffin, Ga./Griffin
15	Ty Lindenman	WR	5-6	165	R-Fr.	Shawnee, Kan./Shawnee Mission Northwest
16	Samari Collier	QB	6-2	230	Fr.	Dallas, Texas/DeSoto
17	James McCourt	K	6-1	215	Sr.	Parkland, Fla./St. Thomas Aquinas
17	Ryan Johnson	QB	6-4	200	Jr.	Green Bay, Wis./Ashwaubenon/Northern Michigan
18	Brandon Peters	QB	6-5	230	Sr.	Avon, Ind./Avon/Michigan
19	Dalevon Campbell	WR	6-4	215	So.	Missouri City, Texas/Fort Bend Marshall
19	Hugh Robertson	P	6-2	230	R-Fr.	Melbourne, Australia/Assumption College Kilmore
20	Tyler Strain	DB	5-9	175	Fr.	Pace, Fla./Pace
21	Jartavius Martin	DB	6-0	195	Jr.	Lehigh Acres, Fla./Lehigh Acres
22	Chase Hayden	RB	5-10	205	Jr.	Memphis, Tenn./Saint George's Independent/Arkansas/East Carolina
23	Reggie Love III	RB	5-11	195	R-Fr.	St. Louis, Mo./Trinity Catholic
24	Nick Fedanzo	RB	6-0	205	R-Fr.	Lombard, Ill./Montini Catholic
24	Prather Hudson	DB	5-11	205	Sr.	Columbus, Ga./Brookstone/Georgia
25	Kerby Joseph	DB	6-1	200	Jr.	Orlando, Fla./Jones
26	Mike Epstein	RB	6-0	205	Jr.	Ft. Lauderdale, Fla./St. Thomas Aquinas
26	DJ Johnson	OLB	6-4	225	Fr.	Snellville, Ga./South Gwinnett
27	Matthew Bobak	RB	5-11	190	R-Fr.	Hinsdale, Ill./Hinsdale Central
27	Mike Manning	DB	5-8	190	So.	Frankfort, Ill./Lincoln-Way East/Butler
28	Dylan Rosiek	LB	6-1	215	Fr.	East Lake, Fla./East Lake
29	Christian Bobak	DB	6-0	195	Sr.	Hinsdale, Ill./Hinsdale Central
30	Sydney Brown	DB	6-0	200	Jr.	London, Ontario/St. Stephens Episcopal School (Fla.)
31	Devon Witherspoon	DB	6-0	180	So.	Pensacola, Fla./Pine Forest
32	Tailon Leitzsey	DB	6-0	185	Sr.	Laurel, Md./Riverside/Missouri Baptist University
33	Ezekiel Holmes	OLB	6-5	245	So.	Wichita Falls, Texas/Hirschi
34	Ryan Meed	LB	6-1	225	R-Fr.	Brooklyn, N.Y./Canarsie
35	Jake Hansen	LB	6-1	235	Sr.	Tarpon Springs, Fla./East Lake
36	Lane Hansen	LS	6-0	220	Fr.	East Lake, Fla./East Lake
36	Ben Schultz	OLB	6-3	230	R-Fr.	Champaign, Ill./Central
37	Jaden Jones-Watkins	DB	6-0	185	So.	Fisher, Ill./Fisher
38	Isaac Darkangelo	LB	6-1	235	R-Fr.	Brighton, Mich./Detroit Catholic Central
39	Aidan Hall	LS	6-2	205	R-Fr.	Glen Ellyn, Ill./Benet Academy



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39	Kenenna Odeluga	LB	6-1	225	Fr.	South Holland, Ill./Mount Carmel
40	Shammond Cooper	OLB	6-2	220	R-Fr.	St. Louis, Mo./Trinity Catholic
40	Lucas Althaus	TE	6-6	230	Fr.	Alpha, Ill./Alwood
41	Preston Engel	TE	6-0	260	So.	Normal, Ill./Normal Community
41	Joriell Washington	DB	6-2	200	Fr.	Fort Myers, Fla./Fort Myers Senior
42	Michael Marchese	TE	6-4	235	Sr.	Vernon Hills, Ill./Stevenson
42	Luke Zardzin	LB	6-0	205	Fr.	Mount Prospect, Ill./Prospect
43	Griffin Moore	TE	6-4	245	R-Fr.	Bloomington, Ill./Bloomington
43	Marko Rajkovic	OLB	6-4	235	Fr.	Franklin, Wis./Franklin
44	Tarique Barnes	LB	6-1	230	So.	Memphis, Tenn./Cordova
45	Khalan Tolson	LB	6-0	220	Jr.	St. Petersburg, Fla./Admiral Farragut Academy
46	Alec McEachern	LB	6-1	225	Jr.	Plainfield, Ill./Benet Academy
48	Bryce Barnes	OLB	6-2	255	So.	Gibson City, Ill./Gibson City-Melvin-Sibley
48	Mike Cerniglia Jr.	TE	6-3	245	R-Fr.	Madison, Wis./Memorial/Northern Illinois
49	Seth Coleman	OLB	6-5	235	R-Fr.	Melbourne, Fla./Holy Trinity Episcopal Academy
49	Max Rosenthal	TE	6-2	260	Jr.	Glencoe, Ill./New Trier/Michigan State
51	Sean Coghlan	LB	6-0	220	Jr.	Chicago, Ill./St. Rita
52	Verdis Brown	DL	6-4	345	So.	Chicago, Ill./IMG Academy (Fla.)
53	Devin Hale	OL	6-0	310	Fr.	Springfield, Ill./Sacred Heart-Griffin
54	Julian Pearl	OL	6-6	310	So.	Danville, Ill./Danville
54	Kalen Villanueva	LB	6-1	210	Fr.	Falls Church, Va./Justice
55	Blake Jeresaty	OL	6-2	305	Sr.	Charleston, S.C./Bishop England/Wofford
55	Sed McConnell	DL	6-2	280	Fr.	Atlanta, Ga./Westlake
56	Ethan Tabel	LS	6-0	230	Sr.	Barrington, Ill./Barrington
57	Evan Kirts	OL	6-5	300	R-Fr.	Evergreen Park, Ill./Brother Rice
59	Josh Plohr	OL	6-3	300	R-Fr.	St. Louis, Mo./Christian Brothers College HS
62	Terry Zapf	OL	6-6	310	So.	Winnetka, Ill./New Trier/Williams (Mass.)
63	Alex Palczewski	OL	6-6	315	Sr.	Mount Prospect, Ill./Prospect
64	Josh Kreutz	OL	6-2	280	Fr.	Bannockburn, Ill./Loyola Academy
65	Doug Kramer	OL	6-2	305	Sr.	Hinsdale, Ill./Hinsdale Central
66	Jordyn Slaughter	OL	6-5	320	So.	Belleville, Ill./Althoff Catholic
67	Brody Wisecarver	OL	6-5	300	Fr.	Chesterfield, Mo./Osage
68	Zachary Barlev	OL	6-5	300	Fr.	Bolingbrook, Ill./Plainfield East
69	Moses Okpala	OL	6-7	295	R-Fr.	St. Louis, Mo./Ladue Horton Watkins
70	Tommy Cronin	OL	6-4	305	R-Fr.	Oak Park, Ill./Oak Park River Forest
72	Jack Badovinac	OL	6-1	300	Sr.	Wilmette, Ill./Loyola Academy/Colgate
73	Josh Gesky	OL	6-5	300	Fr.	Manteno, Ill./Manteno
75	Alex Philstrom	OL	6-6	300	Jr.	Glen Ellyn, Ill./Glenbard West
79	Vederian Lowe	OL	6-6	320	Sr.	Rockford, Ill./Auburn
80	Peyton Vining	WR	6-2	200	Jr.	Bradenton, Fla./Saint Stephens/Denison
81	Marquez Beason	WR	5-11	185	R-Fr.	Dallas, Texas/Duncanville
82	Luke Ford	TE	6-6	260	Jr.	Carterville, Ill./Carterville/Georgia
83	Keion Battle	WR	6-1	190	R-Fr.	Plainfield, Ill./Oswego East/Northern Illinois
84	Owen Hickey	WR	6-2	180	R-Fr.	Des Plaines, Ill./Saint Viator
85	Miles Scott	WR	5-11	195	Fr.	Dolton, Ill./Thornton Fractional North
86	Donny Navarro III	WR	5-11	185	Jr.	Naperville, Ill./Neuqua Valley/Valparaiso
87	Daniel Barker	TE	6-4	250	Jr.	Fort Lauderdale, Fla./Deerfield Beach
88	Keith Randolph Jr.	DL	6-5	270	R-Fr.	Belleville, Ill./Belleville West
89	Tip Reiman	TE	6-5	250	R-Fr.	Rapid City, S.D./O'Gorman
90	Alec Bryant	OLB	6-3	240	R-Fr.	Pearland, Texas/Shadow Creek
91	Jamal Woods	DL	6-2	290	Sr.	Hueytown, Ala./Hueytown
92	Isaiah Gay	OLB	6-3	245	Sr.	Nashville, N.C./Northern Nash
93	Calvin Avery	DL	6-2	335	Jr.	Dallas, Texas/Bishop Dunne
94	Jer'Zhan Newton	DL	6-2	290	R-Fr.	St. Petersburg, Fla./Clearwater Central Catholic
96	Roderick Perry II	DL	6-2	315	Sr.	Raleigh, N.C./Cary/South Carolina State
98	Deon Pate	DL	6-2	265	Jr.	Jacksonville, Fla./Trinity Christian Academy
99	Owen Carney Jr.	OLB	6-3	275	Sr.	Miami, Fla./Miami Central

\* - Denotes eligibility ... Fr. and R-Fr. differentiates between true and second- or third-year freshmen

NOTE: Pronunciations are listed on page 29

# OFFENSIVE LINE



## 72 JACK BADOVINAC

OL, 6-1, 300, SR.

WILMETTE, ILL. / LOYOLA ACADEMY / COLGATE

- » Started 33 games at Colgate
- » Three-time All-Patriot League first team
- » Helped Loyola to the 2015 8A Illinois state title
- » Graduated with a degree in political science from Colgate in 2021
- » Enrolled in the strategic brand communication master's program



## 55 BLAKE JERESATY

OL, 6-2, 305, SR.

CHARLESTON, S.C. / BISHOP ENGLAND / WOFFORD

- » 2021 Phil Steele Preseason All-Big Ten fourth team
- » Played in 35 games with 29 games started at center during Wofford career (2017-19)
- » Missed last season after having surgery when the Big Ten first cancelled the season
- » Graduated with a degree in economics and finance from Wofford
- » Enrolled in the finance master's program



## 65 DOUG KRAMER

C, 6-2, 305, SR.

HINSDALE, ILL. / HINSDALE CENTRAL

- » Kramer, Hayes, and Hansen are the first three-time captains in Illinois history
- » Grew up an Illini fan and attended games as a child
- » Allowed just two sacks over his last 31 games played (2,060 total snaps and 1,018 pass block snaps)
- » No. 30 graded center in the country by PFF (69.0) this season
- » No. 8 graded center in the nation and No. 3 in Power-5 by PFF (79.2) in 2019



## 79 VEDERIAN LOWE

OL, 6-6, 320, SR.

ROCKFORD, ILL. / AUBURN HS

- » 41 straight starts entering the Penn State game
- » 47 career starts, one away from tying the Illinois record
- » No. 28 graded tackle in the country by PFF (76.9) this season
- » Two sons: Kingston Lowe (born in June 2019) and Trey Carter Lowe (born in May 2021)
- » Gained legal guardianship of his younger brother, Vydalis Cockrell, in July 2021



## 63 ALEX PALCZEWSKI

OL, 6-6, 315, SR.

MOUNT PROSPECT, ILL. / PROSPECT

- » No. 58 graded tackle in the country by PFF (72.4) this season
- » 47 career starts, one away from tying the Illinois record
- » Missed the final four games of 2020 with a knee injury
- » Most of his extended family lives in Poland



## 54 JULIAN PEARL

OL, 6-6, 310, SO.

DANVILLE, ILL. / DANVILLE

- » Started three games at right tackle in 2020 after Alex Palczewski was injured
- » Has played both tackle and guard in 2021
- » Played basketball in high school
- » Majoring in sociology



## 75 ALEX PIHLSTROM

OL, 6-6, 300, JR.

GLEN ELLYN, ILL. / GLENBARD WEST

- » Converted from tight end to offensive line prior to 2020 season
- » Former walk-on was awarded a scholarship in November 2020
- » Helped Glenbard West to the 2015 7A Illinois state title

### START STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	G	START
2017	GATE	11	8
2018	GATE	12	12
2019	GATE	11	11
2020	GATE	2	2
2021	ILL	7	3
CAREER		43	36

### START STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	G	START
2017	WOFF	11	5
2018	WOFF	12	12
2019	WOFF	12	12
2020	ILL	DNP - Injury	
2021	ILL	7	3
CAREER		42	32

### START STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	G	START
2017	ILL	8	8
2018	ILL	12	12
2019	ILL	12	12
2020	ILL	5	5
2021	ILL	6	6
CAREER		43	43

### START STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	G	START
2017	ILL	8	7
2018	ILL	12	12
2019	ILL	13	13
2020	ILL	8	8
2021	ILL	7	7
CAREER		48	47

### START STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	G	START
2017	ILL	12	11
2018	ILL	12	12
2019	ILL	13	13
2020	ILL	4	4
2021	ILL	7	7
CAREER		48	47

### START STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	G	START
2019	ILL	3	0
2020	ILL	7	3
2021	ILL	7	5
CAREER		17	8

### START STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	G	START
2019	ILL	1	0
2020	ILL	8	2
2021	ILL	7	4
CAREER		16	6



# OFFENSIVE LINE

## Veteran Offensive Line Room

- The offensive line returned three starters from its main offensive line in 2020. Senior **Doug Kramer** (Hinsdale, Ill.), senior **Vederian Lowe** (Rockford, Ill.), senior **Alex Palczewski** (Mount Prospect, Ill.) lead the line. 2020 starter **Verdis Brown** (Chicago, Ill.) switched to defensive line in 2021.
- Illinois returned 131 career FBS offensive line starts at the start of 2021, including 80 combined starts between its two tackles: OT Vederian Lowe (40), OT Alex Palczewski (40 - 29 at tackle), C Doug Kramer (37), OG-turned-DL Verdis Brown (8), OT Julian Pearl (4), OG Alex Pihlstrom (2).
- At the start of the season, Illinois was the only team in the country with three offensive linemen with 35+ career starts.
- At the start of the season, Illinois returned 193 career Division I (FBS/FCS) starts on its offensive line, the most in the nation by 13 starts, with the addition of **Blake Jeresaty** and **Jack Badovinac**.
  - » OL **Blake Jeresaty** (Charleston, S.C.) started 29 games at center for FCS Wofford before transferring to Illinois in 2020.
  - » OL **Jack Badovinac** (Wilmette, Ill.) started 33 games for FCS Colgate before transferring to Illinois in 2020.
- Illinois' 83 career starts at tackle between its two starting tackles is the most in the country (Lowe 47, Palczewski 47 total, 36 at tackle).
- Lowe and Palczewski are approaching the Illinois record for career starts. With a start against Penn State, they would tie the record for career starts in Illini history (48).
- Five Illini have earned All-Big Ten honors or all-conference honors elsewhere in their career.
  - » Kramer (2019 and 2020 Big Ten honorable mention)
  - » Lowe (2020 Big Ten honorable mention)
  - » Palczewski (2019 Big Ten third team and 2018 Big Ten honorable mention)
  - » Jeresaty (2019 Southern Conference first team and All-American – at Wofford)
  - » Badovinac (2018, 2019, 2021 All-Patriot League first team – at Colgate)



## MOST STARTS IN ILLINOIS HISTORY

PLAYER	STARTS
1. Nathan Scheelhaase, QB (2010-13)	48
Ryan McDonald, C (2005-08)	48
Tim Simpson, OL (1988-91)	48
2. Vederian Lowe, OL (2017-21)	47
Alex Palczewski, OL (2017-21)	47
Mason Monheim, LB (2012-15)	47
Jeff Allen, OL (2008-11)	47
Bucky Babcock, OL (2001-04)	47
Tony Pashos, OL (1999-2002)	47

## MOST RETURNING DIV. I O-LINE STARTS

entering the 2021 season

TEAM	FBS/FCS OL STARTS
1. Illinois	193
2. Minnesota	180
3. Miami (Fla.)	159
4. Arkansas State	157

## MOST RETURNING FBS O-LINE STARTS

entering the 2021 season

TEAM	FBS OT STARTS
1. Minnesota	180
2. Miami (Fla.)	159
3. Michigan State	151
4. Arkansas State	149
5. Wyoming	145
6. SMU	142
7. Coastal Carolina	137
Georgia State	137
9. Illinois	131
Liberty	131

## MOST FBS TACKLE STARTS AMONG A DUO

entering the 2021 season

TEAM	FBS OT STARTS
1. Illinois	69
Vederian Lowe (40)/Alex Palczewski (29)	
2. Southern Miss	66
Arvin Fletcher (47)/Khalique Washington (19)	



# QUARTERBACKS



## 17 RYAN JOHNSON

QB, 6-4, 200, JR.

GREEN BAY, WIS. / ASHWAUBENON / NORTHERN MICHIGAN

- » Completed 203 passes for 1,263 yards and eight touchdowns as a sophomore at Northern Michigan
- » Completed 122 passes for 1,581 yards and nine touchdowns as a freshman at Northern Michigan
- » Transferred to Illinois with two years of eligibility remaining



## 18 BRANDON PETERS

QB, 6-5, 230, SR.

AVON, IND. / AVON / MICHIGAN

- » 2021 Johnny Unitas Golden Arm watch list
- » Attended the prestigious Manning Passing Academy in July 2021
- » Earned bachelor's degree in general studies from Michigan in June 2019
- » Graduated from Illinois' recreation, sport, and tourism master's program in December 2020
- » Threw for a career-high 368 yards and three touchdowns against Michigan State 11/9/19 in a 25-point comeback, the biggest comeback in Illinois history, to win 37-34 on a last second touchdown pass
- » Played in 10 games for Michigan from 2017-18 with four starts (all four starts were in 2017)
- » No. 34 recruit in the nation, No. 3 pro style quarterback in the nation coming out of Avon HS (Ind.) by 247Sports Composite



## 12 MATT ROBINSON

QB, 6-1, 190, SO.

SAN CLEMENTE, CALIF. / J SERRA CATHOLIC

- » Father, Jeoff, played football at Pacific (Calif.) from 1975-76 when former Illinois head coach Ron Turner was a wide receiver for the Tigers
- » Uncle, Greg Robinson, was a long-time NFL and college football coach
- » Three-star recruit by 247Sports Composite coming out of J Serra Catholic (Calif.)



## 9 ARTUR SITKOWSKI

QB, 6-5, 225, SO.

OLD BRIDGE, N.J. / IMG ACADEMY (FLA.)

- » Career-high three passing touchdowns against UTSA 9/4/21
- » Big Ten Offensive Player of the Week 8/30/21 following 12-of-15, 124 yards, two touchdown performance vs. Nebraska 8/28/21
- » Stepped in for injured Brandon Peters in his first career game for Illinois in the season opener against Nebraska 8/29/21
- » Fourth season of college football, but has only used one year of eligibility
- » Started 13 games at Rutgers (11 in 2018, 2 in 2019)
- » Four-star recruit and rated the nation's No. 9 pro-style quarterback by ESPN.com in high school
  - » Transferred to IMG Academy (Fla.) for his senior season

### PASSING STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	G	CMP	ATT	PCT	YDS	YDS/A	TDS	INT	SACKED	YDS
2017	NMU	11	122	203	60.1	1,581	7.8	9	4	-	-
2018	NMU	DNP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2019	NMU	10	101	204	49.5	1,263	6.2	6	6	-	-
2020	NMU	DNP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2021	ILL	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
CAREER		21	223	407	54.8	2,844	7.0	17	10	-	-

### PASSING STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	G	CMP	ATT	PCT	YDS	YDS/A	TDS	INT	SACKED	YDS
2017	MICH	6	57	108	52.8	672	6.2	4	2	7	57
2018	MICH	4	1	2	50.0	8	4.0	0	1	0	0
2019	ILL	11	152	275	55.3	1884	6.9	18	8	24	179
2020	ILL	5	39	80	48.8	429	5.4	3	0	4	25
2021	ILL	5	40	82	48.8	410	5.0	1	1	11	89
CAREER		31	289	547	52.8	3403	6.2	26	12	46	350

### RUSHING/RECEIVING STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	G	RUSH	YDS	AVG	TD	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
2017	MICH	6	17	-36	-2.1	0	0	0	-	0
2018	MICH	4	-	-	-	-	0	0	-	0
2019	ILL	11	74	213	2.9	3	0	0	-	0
2020	ILL	5	24	136	5.7	1	0	0	-	0
2021	ILL	5	17	-58	-3.4	0	0	0	-	0
CAREER		31	132	255	1.9	4	0	0	-	0

### PASSING STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	G	CMP	ATT	PCT	YDS	YDS/A	TDS	INT	SACKED	YDS
2018	ILL	3	3	6	50.0	11	1.8	0	1	1	7
2019	ILL	8	42	77	54.5	475	6.2	1	0	14	106
2020	ILL	2	3	4	75.0	22	5.5	0	0	2	4
CAREER		13	48	87	55.2	508	5.8	1	1	17	117

### RUSHING/RECEIVING STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	G	RUSH	YDS	AVG	TD	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
2018	ILL	3	8	24	3.0	0	0	0	-	0
2019	ILL	8	30	-45	-1.5	1	0	0	-	0
2020	ILL	2	4	5	1.3	0	0	0	-	0
CAREER		13	42	-16	-0.4	1	0	0	-	0

### PASSING STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	G	CMP	ATT	PCT	YDS	YDS/A	TDS	INT	SACKED	YDS
2018	RUT	11	134	273	49.1	1158	4.2	4	18	12	96
2019	RUT	3	44	68	64.7	429	6.3	1	2	2	14
2020	RUT	4	52	81	64.2	444	5.5	3	0	6	33
2021	ILL	4	66	129	51.2	666	5.2	6	1	4	17
CAREER		22	296	551	53.7	2697	4.9	14	21	24	160

### RUSHING/RECEIVING STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	G	RUSH	YDS	AVG	TD	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
2018	RUT	11	22	-66	-3.0	0	0	0	-	0
2019	RUT	3	8	-7	-0.9	0	0	0	-	0
2020	RUT	4	14	2	0.1	0	0	0	-	0
2021	ILL	4	16	39	2.4	0	0	0	-	0
CAREER		22	60	-32	-0.5	0	0	0	-	0





# RUNNING BACKS



## 2 CHASE BROWN

RB, 5-11, 205, SO.

LONDON, ONTARIO, CANADA / ST. STEPHENS EPISCOPAL (FLA.) / WESTERN MICHIGAN

- » 257 rushing yards vs. Charlotte 10/2/21 was the fourth-most in Illinois history
- » Identical twin brother, Sydney, is a safety for the Illini
- » Fourth in the Big Ten in rushing yards (510) and eighth in yards per carry (5.5) in 2020
- » Played in four games and redshirted the 2019 season, his first at Illinois



## 22 CHASE HAYDEN

RB, 5-10, 205, JR.

MEMPHIS, TENN. / ST. GEORGE'S INDEPENDENT / ARKANSAS / EAST CAROLINA

- » Started his collegiate career at Arkansas in 2017 for head coach Bret Bielema
- » Rushed for 120 yards in his debut against Florida A&M for Arkansas
- » Father, Aaron Hayden, rushed for over 2,000 yards at Tennessee from 1991-94 and played four years in the NFL after being drafted in the fourth round in 1995



## 23 REGGIE LOVE II

RB, 5-11, 195, R-FR.

ST. LOUIS, MO. / TRINITY CATHOLIC

- » Played for head coach Cory Patterson, who is now Illinois' running backs coach, during his first two high school seasons
- » Four-star recruit by Rivals, three-star recruit by 247 and ESPN



## 0 JOSH MCCRAY

RB, 6-1, 240, FR.

ENTERPRISE, ALA. / ENTERPRISE

- » Fifth in the Big Ten in yards per carry (5.3)
- » 2020 Alabama Sports Writers Association Class 7A All-State first team
- » High school coach was Jed Kennedy, the same high school coach as Bielema product Melvin Gordon
- » Heavily recruited as a linebacker
- » Offers included Arkansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Washington State



## 3 JAKARI NORWOOD

RB, 5-10, 195, SO.

POMPANO BEACH, FLA. / DEERFIELD BEACH

- » High school teammate of Illinois TE Daniel Barker
- » Cousin, Lamar Jackson, played football at Louisville and was the 2016 Heisman Trophy winner

### RUSHING/RECEIVING STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	G	RUSH	YDS	AVG	TD	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
2018	WMU	13	71	352	5.0	0	10	75	7.5	0
2019	ILL	4	3	18	6.0	0	0	0	-	0
2020	ILL	8	104	540	5.2	3	7	64	9.1	0
2021	ILL	5	60	414	6.9	3	9	104	11.6	0
CAREER		30	238	1324	5.6	6	26	243	9.3	0

### RUSHING/RECEIVING STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	G	RUSH	YDS	AVG	TD	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
2017	ARK	7	61	326	5.3	4	1	23	23.0	0
2018	ARK	12	57	251	4.4	1	11	61	5.5	0
2019	ARK	4	12	39	3.3	0	4	12	3.0	0
2020	ECU	3	16	62	3.9	0	1	31	31.0	0
2021	ILL	2	5	18	3.6	0	0	0	-	0
CAREER		28	151	696	4.6	5	17	127	7.5	0

### RUSHING/RECEIVING STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	G	RUSH	YDS	AVG	TD	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
2020	ILL	3	10	12	1.2	0	0	0	-	0
2021	ILL	5	42	117	2.8	0	2	12	6.0	0
CAREER		8	52	129	2.5	0	2	12	6.0	0

### RUSHING/RECEIVING STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	G	RUSH	YDS	AVG	TD	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
2021	ILL	6	63	334	5.3	1	1	40	40.0	0
CAREER		6	63	334	5.3	1	1	40	40.0	0

### RUSHING/RECEIVING STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	G	RUSH	YDS	AVG	TD	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
2018	ILL	3	5	29	5.8	0	1	11	11.0	0
2019	ILL	6	15	94	6.3	0	2	-1	-0.5	0
2020	ILL	1	2	1	0.5	0	0	0	-	0
2021	ILL	6	23	109	4.7	0	3	6	2.0	0
CAREER		16	45	233	5.2	0	6	16	2.7	0

## ILLINOIS RECORDS

### MOST RUSHING YARDS IN A GAME

1. Mikel Leshoure at Northwestern, 11/20/2010 . . . . . 330
2. Robert Holcombe at Minnesota, 11/16/1996 . . . . . 315
3. Howard Griffith vs. Northwestern, 11/24/1990 . . . . . 263
4. Chase Brown vs. Charlotte, 10/2/2021 . . . . . 257
5. Jim Grabowski vs. Wisconsin, 11/14/1964 . . . . . 239
6. Red Grange at Pennsylvania, 10/31/1925 . . . . . 237

### MOST RUSHING YARDS IN A GAME BY A TRUE FRESHMAN

1. Rocky Harvey vs. Middle Tennessee, 9/12/1998 . . . . . 215
2. Ke'Shawn Vaughn at Purdue, 11/7/2015. . . . . 180
- Mitchell Brookins at Northwestern, 11/17/1979 . . . . . 180
4. Jason Ford vs. Indiana, 10/18/2008 . . . . . 172
5. Josh McCray at Purdue, 9/25/2021. . . . . 156



# WIDE RECEIVERS



## 13 PAT BRYANT

WR, 6-3, 195, FR.

JACKSONVILLE, FLA. / ATLANTIC COAST

- » Three-star recruit by 247Sports, ESPN, and Rivals
- » Brother, Brandon Harris, played linebacker at USF
- » Offers included Iowa, Indiana, Nebraska, Miami, Minnesota, Penn State, Florida State, Virginia



## 19 DALEVON CAMPBELL

WR, 6-4, 215, SO.

MISSOURI CITY, TEXAS / FORD BEND MARSHALL

- » Also ran track at Fort Bend Marshall HS, winning the Texas 5A 4x200 meter relay state title with a school record time of 1:23.52 helping Fort Bend Marshall to the team title



## 86 DONNY NAVARRO

WR, 5-11, 185, JR.

NAPERVILLE, ILL. / NEUQUA VALLEY / VALPARAISO

- » Walk-on was awarded scholarship on Nov. 7, 2019
- » First career Illini touchdown on a 48-yard reception vs. No. 6 Wisconsin 10/19/19 to help Illinois win 24-23 and complete one of the biggest upsets in Big Ten history
- » Led Valparaiso in receptions (32), receiving yards (539), receiving touchdowns (5) as a freshman



## 11 CARLOS SANDY

WR, 5-9, 185, SO.

DANIA BEACH, FLA. / CARDINAL GIBBONS

- » Scored first career touchdown against Iowa 12/5/20
- » Ranked No. 147 wide receiver in the nation by ESPN and No. 270 by 247Sports



## 6 DEUCE SPANN

WR, 6-4, 195, R-FR.

ST. PETERSBURG, FLA. / LAKEWOOD

- » 45-yard reception in his first career snap at wide receiver vs. Nebraska 8/28/21
- » 31-yard touchdown reception vs. UTSA 9/4/21
- » Moved from quarterback to wide receiver during the final two weeks of 2021 training camp
- » Father, Greg Spann Sr., played wide receiver at Jackson State and was drafted in the seventh round of the 1996 NFL Draft by the Jacksonville Jaguars



## 14 CASEY WASHINGTON

WR, 6-2, 190, SO.

ROUND ROCK, TEXAS / PFLUGERVILLE

- » Transferred to Wake Forest for spring practice in 2021 before transferring back to Illinois
- » Granted eligibility by the NCAA for 2021 upon his return to Illinois
- » 18-yard reception on a fourth-quarter drive vs. No. 6 Wisconsin 10/19/19 to help Illinois win 24-23 and complete one of the biggest upsets in Big Ten history



## 1 ISAIAH WILLIAMS

WR, 5-10, 180, R-FR.

ST. LOUIS, MO. / TRINITY

- » Nickname: "One"
- » Tied for fifth the nation in receptions among freshmen (32)
- » Converted QB, set Illinois record for rushing yards by a QB in a game (195) at Rutgers in 2020
- » Switched to wide receiver for the final two practices of spring ball in 2021
- » Illinois' highest ranked quarterback recruit since Juice Williams in 2006
- » Four-star recruit by 247Sports, Rivals and ESPN
- » Ranked No. 47 recruit in the nation by Rivals, No. 93 by ESPN and No. 295 by 247Sports

### RUSHING/RECEIVING STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	G	RUSH	YDS	AVG	TD	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
2021	ILL	5	0	0	-	0	4	42	10.5	0
CAREER		5	0	0	-	0	4	42	10.5	0

### RUSHING/RECEIVING STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	G	RUSH	YDS	AVG	TD	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
2019	ILL	5	0	0	-	0	0	0	-	0
2020	ILL	7	0	0	-	0	3	48	16.0	0
2021	ILL	7	0	0	-	0	3	50	16.7	0
CAREER		15	0	0	-	0	6	98	16.3	0

### RECEIVING STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	G	RUSH	YDS	AVG	TD	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
2017	VALPO	11	7	30	4.3	0	32	539	16.8	5
2019	ILL	13	1	6	6.0	0	27	345	12.8	2
2020	ILL	4	0	0	-	0	8	88	11.0	0
2021	ILL	7	0	0	-	0	11	105	9.5	0
CAREER		35	8	36	4.5	0	78	1077	13.8	7

### RUSHING/RECEIVING STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	G	RUSH	YDS	AVG	TD	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
2018	ILL	10	0	0	-	0	1	3	3.0	0
2019	ILL	1	0	0	-	0	4	22	5.5	0
2020	ILL	2	0	0	-	0	1	29	29.0	1
2021	ILL	7	0	0	-	0	1	7	7.0	0
CAREER		20	0	0	-	0	7	61	8.7	1

### RUSHING/RECEIVING STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	G	RUSH	YDS	AVG	TD	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
2020	ILL	1	1	1	1.0	0	0	0	-	0
2021	ILL	6	0	0	-	0	4	117	29.3	2
CAREER		7	1	1	1.0	0	4	117	29.3	2

### RUSHING/RECEIVING STATISTICS

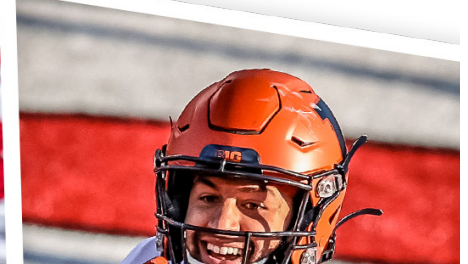
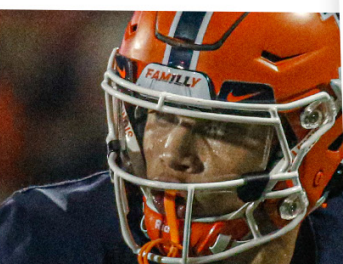
YEAR	TEAM	G	RUSH	YDS	AVG	TD	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
2019	ILL	10	0	0	-	0	11	132	12.0	0
2020	ILL	5	0	0	-	0	10	106	10.6	0
2021	ILL	7	0	30	-	1	13	108	8.3	0
CAREER		22	0	30	-	1	34	346	10.2	0

### RUSHING/RECEIVING STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	G	RUSH	YDS	AVG	TD	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
2019	ILL	4	9	16	1.8	0	3	9	3.0	0
2020	ILL	6	63	389	6.2	1	0	0	-	0
2021	ILL	7	6	15	2.5	0	32	298	9.3	1
CAREER		17	78	420	5.4	1	35	307	8.8	1

### PASSING STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	G	CMP	ATT	PCT	YDS	YDS/A	TDS	INT	SACKED	YDS
2019	ILL	4	3	10	30.0	38	3.8	0	1	1	3
2020	ILL	6	26	63	41.3	393	6.2	4	2	4	17
2021	ILL	7	0	1	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0
CAREER		17	29	74	39.2	431	5.8	4	3	5	20





# TIGHT ENDS



## 87 DANIEL BARKER

TE, 6-4, 250, JR.

FORT LAUDERDALE, FLA. / DEERFIELD BEACH

- » Illinois career record holder for touchdown receptions by a tight end (10)
- » Eight 20+ yard catches led Big Ten tight ends in 2020
- » Last-second TD catch at Michigan State 11/9/19 to finish the biggest comeback in Illinois history
- » Second true freshman TE to start a season opener in Illini history in 2018, joining Evan Wilson in 2010



## 82 LUKE FORD

TE, 6-6, 260, JR.

CARTERVILLE, ILL. / CARTERVILLE / GEORGIA

- » Originally verbally committed to Bret Bielema at Arkansas before going to Georgia
- » Illinois native sat out 2019 after transferring from Georgia, where he played nine games in 2018
- » Ranked No. 1 tight end in the nation by Rivals and No. 3 by 247Sports and ESPN in the class of 2018
- » Ranked No. 42 recruit in the nation in the class of 2018 by Rivals, No. 51 by 247Sports



## 42 MICHAEL MARCHESE

TE, 6-4, 235, SR.

VERNON HILLS, ILL. / STEVENSON

- » 2021 Wuerffel Trophy watch list
- » 2021 Allstate Good Works Team nominee
- » Switched to tight end during 2021 spring practices
- » Awarded with a scholarship by head coach Bret Bielema during team meeting 4/6/21



## 89 TIP REIMAN

TE, 6-5, 250, R-FR.

RAPID CITY, S.D. / O'GORMAN

- » Majoring in Kinesiology, wants to be a strength and conditioning coach
- » Awarded with a scholarship by head coach Bret Bielema during team meeting 9/8/21
- » Primarily played on special teams in 2020



## 49 MAX ROSENTHAL

TE, 6-2, 260, JR.

GLENCOE, ILL. / NEW TRIER / MICHIGAN STATE

- » Graduated with a degree in advertising management from Michigan State in May 2021
- » First career start at Michigan 11/16/19 and caught first career TD pass in first quarter

### RUSHING/RECEIVING STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	G	RUSH	YDS	AVG	TD	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
2018	ILL	12	0	0	-	0	9	84	9.3	1
2019	ILL	13	0	0	-	0	18	273	15.2	4
2020	ILL	7	0	0	-	0	19	268	14.1	2
2021	ILL	7	0	0	-	0	9	100	11.1	3
CAREER		40	0	0	-	0	55	725	13.2	10

### RUSHING/RECEIVING STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	G	RUSH	YDS	AVG	TD	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
2018	UGA	9	0	0	-	0	1	4	4.0	0
2020	ILL	2	0	0	-	0	2	15	7.5	0
2021	ILL	7	0	0	-	0	11	77	7.0	1
CAREER		18	0	0	-	0	14	96	6.9	1

### RUSHING/RECEIVING STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	G	RUSH	YDS	AVG	TD	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
2017	ILL	5	0	0	-	0	0	0	-	0
2018	ILL	11	0	0	-	0	0	0	-	0
2019	ILL	12	0	0	-	0	0	0	-	0
2020	ILL	3	0	0	-	0	0	0	-	0
2021	ILL	7	0	0	-	0	0	0	-	0
CAREER		38	0	0	-	0	0	0	-	0

### RUSHING/RECEIVING STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	G	RUSH	YDS	AVG	TD	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
2020	ILL	8	0	0	-	0	0	0	-	0
2021	ILL	7	0	0	-	0	1	4	4.0	0
CAREER		15	0	0	-	0	1	4	4.0	0

### RUSHING/RECEIVING STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	G	RUSH	YDS	AVG	TD	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
2018	MSU	8	0	0	-	1	0	0	-	0
2019	MSU	12	0	0	-	0	2	4	2.0	1
2021	ILL	7	0	0	-	0	0	0	-	0
CAREER		27	0	0	-	1	2	4	2.0	1

## ILLINOIS RECORDS

### CAREER TOUCHDOWN RECEPTIONS BY A TIGHT END

1. Daniel Barker, 2018-present ..... 10
2. Ken Dilger, 1991-94 ..... 9

### CAREER RECEIVING YARDS BY A TIGHT END

1. Doug Dieken, 1968-70 ..... 1,246
2. Tim Brewster, 1982-83 ..... 1,233
3. Ken Dilger, 1991-94 ..... 1,073
4. Anthony Williams, 1984-87 ..... 893
5. Jeff Finke, 1988-90 ..... 780
6. Joe Smalzer, 1974-75 ..... 766
7. Cap Boso, 1983-85 ..... 756
8. Daniel Barker, 2018-present ..... 725
9. Matt Cushing, 1994-97 ..... 709
10. Mike Sherrad, 1977-80 ..... 665



# DEFENSIVE LINE



## 93 CALVIN AVERY

DL, 6-2, 335, JR.

DALLAS, TEXAS / BISHOP DUNNE

- » 2017 Under Armour All-America Game participant
- » 2017 US Army All-American Game invitation
- » Four-star recruit by 247Sports, ESPN and Rivals coming out of Bishop Dunne



## 52 VERDIS BROWN

DL, 6-4, 345, SO.

CHICAGO, ILL. / IMG ACADEMY (FLA.)

- » Played defensive tackle in 2018, then switched to offensive line for 2019 and 2020, before switching back to defensive line for 2021
- » Started all eight games on the offensive line in 2020
- » Announced his commitment to Illinois at Robert A. Black Elementary School in Chicago



## 94 JER'ZHAN NEWTON

DL, 6-2, 290, R-FR.

ST. PETERSBURG, FLA. / CLEARWATER CENTRAL CATHOLIC

- » Goes by "Johnny" but chose to be listed on the roster as his real name, Jer'Zhan
- » Became the 18th true freshman to start a game on the defensive line in Illinois history in 2020
- » Highest rated true freshman defender (85.8) by PFF after his first career forced fumble and two tackles against Purdue 10/31/20



## 96 RODERICK PERRY II

DL, 6-3, 315, SR.

RALEIGH, N.C. / CARY / SOUTH CAROLINA STATE

- » 2020 All-Big Ten honorable mention (media and coaches)
- » Transferred to Illinois from South Carolina State as a graduate transfer
- » Highest rated draft-eligible defensive tackle in the Big Ten by Phil Steele in 2020
- » Was a 2020 Preseason FCS All-American before transferring



## 88 KEITH RANDOLPH JR.

DL, 6-5, 300, R-FR.

BELLEVILLE, ILL. / BELLEVILLE WEST

- » First career interception vs. Charlotte 10/2/21
- » Did not start playing football until his junior year of high school
- » Also played basketball in high school and led Belleville West to two state titles along with Ohio State basketball star E.J. Liddell



## 91 JAMAL WOODS

DL, 6-2, 290, JR.

HUEYTOWN, ALA. / HUEYTOWN

- » Goes by "Bobo"
- » Talented chef, aspires to own a food truck
- » Has a rap album available on Spotify
- » 2017 BTN.com All-Freshman Team honorable mention

### DEFENSIVE STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	GP	UA	A	TOT	TFL-YD	SACKS-YD	INT	PD	FF	FR	BLK
2018	ILL	12	6	12	18	1.5-4	0-0	0	0	0	0	1
2019	ILL	12	2	6	8	1-4	1-4	0	0	0	0	1
2020	ILL	7	10	4	14	1-6	1-6	0	0	0	0	0
2021	ILL	6	2	2	4	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
CAREER		37	20	24	44	3.5-14	2.0-10	0	0	0	0	2

### DEFENSIVE STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	GP	UA	A	TOT	TFL-YD	SACKS-YD	INT	PD	FF	FR	BLK
2019	ILL	13	0	0	0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
2020	ILL	8	0	0	0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
2021	ILL	3	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
CAREER		24	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0

### DEFENSIVE STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	GP	UA	A	TOT	TFL-YD	SACKS-YD	INT	PD	FF	FR	BLK
2020	ILL	8	6	17	23	1.5-11	1.5-11	0	0	1	0	0
2021	ILL	7	7	13	20	2-17	2-17	0	0	0	0	0
CAREER		15	13	30	43	3.5-28	3.5-28	0	0	1	0	0

### DEFENSIVE STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	GP	UA	A	TOT	TFL	YDS	PD	FF	FR	BLK	QBH
2017	SCST	8	11	5	16	4.0	4	1	0	0	0	0
2018	SCST	10	13	4	17	2.5	4	1	0	0	0	1
2019	SCST	11	26	8	32	14.5	57	0	1	1	0	3
CAREER		29	50	17	65	21	65	2	1	1	0	4
YEAR	TEAM	GP	UA	A	TOT	TFL-YD	SACKS-YD	INT	PD	FF	FR	BLK
2020	ILL	6	5	12	17	2.5-21	2-20	0	1	0	0	0
2021	ILL	7	10	5	15	2-8	1-6	0	1	0	0	0
CAREER		13	15	17	32	4.5-29	3.0-26	0	2	0	0	0

### DEFENSIVE STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	GP	UA	A	TOT	TFL-YD	SACKS-YD	INT	PD	FF	FR	BLK
2019	ILL	4	3	4	7	0.5-2	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
2020	ILL	5	4	4	8	0-0	0-0	0	1	0	0	0
2021	ILL	5	6	6	12	2.5-10	2-10	1	1	1	0	0
CAREER		14	13	14	27	3.0-12	2.0-10	1	2	1	0	0

### DEFENSIVE STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	GP	UA	A	TOT	TFL-YD	SACKS-YD	INT	PD	FF	FR	BLK
2017	ILL	11	12	12	24	3.5-7	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
2018	ILL	4	11	2	13	4-12	1-2	0	3	0	0	0
2019	ILL	9	10	4	14	5.5-19	0.5-3	0	0	1	0	0
2020	ILL	4	2	2	4	0.5-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
2021	ILL	6	3	5	8	1-3	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
CAREER		34	38	25	63	14.5-41	1.5-5	0	3	1	0	0





# OUTSIDE LINEBACKERS



## 48 BRYCE BARNES

OLB, 6-2, 255, SO.

GIBSON CITY, ILL. / GIBSON CITY-MELVIN-SIBLEY

- » Helped lead GCMS to back-to-back IHSAA Class 2A State Championships in 2017 and 2018
- » Also played basketball at GCMS, scoring over 1,000 career points and helped the basketball team to third place at IHSAA 2A state finals



## 99 OWEN CARNEY JR.

OLB, 6-3, 275, SR.

MIAMI, FLA. / MIAMI CENTRAL

- » Graduated with a degree in communication
- » Enrolled in the recreation, sport, and tourism master's program
- » Fourth in the Big Ten in sacks (5.0) and 13th in the Big Ten in TFLs (7.0) in 2020
- » 2020 All-Big Ten second team (media and coaches)



## 49 SETH COLEMAN

OLB, 6-5, 235, R-FR.

MELBOURNE, FLA. / HOLY TRINITY EPISCOPAL ACADEMY

- » Six tackles, 1.0 TFL, one PBU, one forced fumble, and one fumble recovery against Maryland 9/18/21
- » Third-year freshman after a redshirt season and 2020's COVID season
- » Broke into the starting lineup in 2020 and started four games



## 92 ISAIAH GAY

OLB, 6-3, 245, SR.

NASHVILLE, N.C. / NORTHERN NASH

- » Third-youngest player in FBS to start a game as a freshman in 2017
- » Fumble recovery vs. No. 6 Wisconsin 10/19/19 to help Illinois win 24-23 and complete one of the biggest upsets in Big Ten history
- » Highest graded defensive player in the Big Ten by PFF during Week 5 against Charlotte (91.2)



## 33 EZEKIEL HOLMES

OLB, 6-5, 245, SO.

WICHITA FALLS, TEXAS / HIRSCHI

- » Plays the piano and drums
- » Also played basketball and threw shot put in high school



## 26 DJ JOHNSON

OLB, 6-4, 225, FR.

SNELLVILLE, GA. / SOUTH GWINNETT

- » One of the first Illini recruits for head coach Bret Bielema
- » Plans to become a chef and open his own restaurant following his playing career (food science and nutrition major)
- » Life experiences include being chased by a bear, driving from Alaska to Atlanta with his grandma, and climbing a mountain with no rope

### DEFENSIVE STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	GP	UA	A	TOT	TFL-YD	SACKS-YD	INT	PD	FF	FR	BLK
2019	ILL	13	0	0	0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
2020	ILL	8	0	3	3	0.5-1	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
2021	ILL	6	0	0	0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
CAREER		27	0	3	3	0.5-1	0-0	0	0	0	0	0

### DEFENSIVE STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	GP	UA	A	TOT	TFL-YD	SACKS-YD	INT	PD	FF	FR	BLK
2017	ILL	10	4	2	6	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
2018	ILL	12	10	11	21	4.5-17	2.5-13	0	1	0	1	0
2019	ILL	13	6	9	15	2-8	2-8	0	1	0	0	0
2020	ILL	8	14	14	28	7-50	5-40	0	0	1	0	0
2021	ILL	7	9	16	25	5-30	4.5-28	0	1	0	0	0
CAREER		50	43	52	95	18.5-105	14.0-89	0	3	1	1	0

### DEFENSIVE STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	GP	UA	A	TOT	TFL-YD	SACKS-YD	INT	PD	FF	FR	BLK
2019	ILL	3	0	0	0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
2020	ILL	8	7	6	13	3.5-8	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
2021	ILL	6	13	8	21	3-14	2-12	0	1	1	1	0
CAREER		17	20	14	34	6.5-22	2.0-12	0	1	1	1	0

### DEFENSIVE STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	GP	UA	A	TOT	TFL-YD	SACKS-YD	INT	PD	FF	FR	BLK
2017	ILL	12	12	8	20	4-17	1-13	0	0	0	0	1
2018	ILL	9	14	6	20	1-9	1-9	0	0	0	0	0
2019	ILL	11	13	14	27	3.5-5	1-2	0	3	1	1	0
2020	ILL	7	11	8	19	3-13	2.5-12	0	2	0	1	0
2021	ILL	7	7	9	16	2-8	0.5-5	0	1	0	1	0
CAREER		46	57	45	102	13.5-52	6.0-41	0	6	1	3	1

### DEFENSIVE STATISTICS

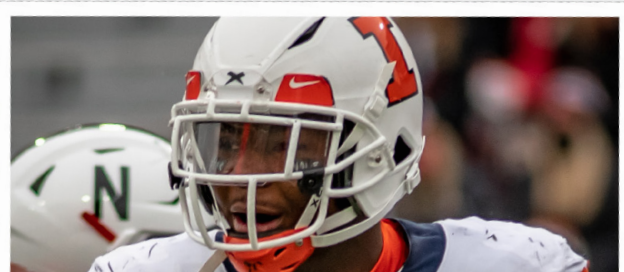
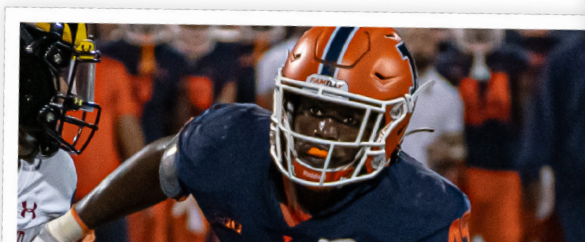
YEAR	TEAM	GP	UA	A	TOT	TFL-YD	SACKS-YD	INT	PD	FF	FR	BLK
2018	ILL	1	0	0	0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
2019	ILL	1	0	0	0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
2020	ILL	4	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
2021	ILL	7	2	1	3	1-1	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
CAREER		13	2	2	4	1-1	0-0	0	0	0	0	0

### DEFENSIVE STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	GP	UA	A	TOT	TFL-YD	SACKS-YD	INT	PD	FF	FR	BLK
2021	ILL	7	2	2	4	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
CAREER		7	2	2	4	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0

## Carney, Gay, Coleman Lead the OLBs

- Seth Coleman had the best game of his young career against Maryland, totaling six tackles (three solo), 1.0 TFL, one breakup, one forced fumble, and one fumble recovery. He had a simultaneous strip/recovery in the second half to change Illinois' momentum in the game.
- The outside linebacker position is new on the Illini roster following the arrival of Bret Bielema. Bielema transitioned the previous staff's defensive ends to outside linebackers.
- After initially testing the transfer portal, OLB Owen Carney Jr. returned to Illinois. Carney held offers from Florida State, Penn State, and Wake Forest, among others, while in the portal.



# LINEBACKERS



## 44 TARIQUE BARNES

LB, 6-1, 230, SO.

MEMPHIS, TENN. / CORDOVA

- » First significant playing time at Wisconsin 10/23/20 after Jake Hansen left the game with an injury
- » Career-high 11 tackles, 1.5 TFLs, 1.0 sack, and a 39-yard fumble return for a TD at Wisconsin 10/23/20
- » Missed the final three games of 2020 with an injury
- » Second on the team in special teams tackles (8) in 2019



## 35 JAKE HANSEN

LB, 6-1, 235, SR.

TARPON SPRINGS, FLA. / EAST LAKE

- » Kramer, Hayes, and Hansen are the first three-time captains in Illinois history
- » 2020 All-Big Ten second team (media) and 2020 All-Big Ten third team (coaches)
- » Led the nation in takeaways over the span of two seasons with 14 from 2019-20
- » 2019 Butkus Award semifinalist
- » Led the nation in forced fumbles (7) and forced fumbles per game (0.78) in 2019



## 5 CALVIN HART JR.

LB, 6-1, 230, SO.

FORT LAUDERDALE, FLA. / AMERICAN HERITAGE / NORTH CAROLINA STATE

- » Big Ten Defensive Player of the Week 8/30/21 following fumble recovery TD and 1.5 TFLs vs. Nebraska 8/28/21
- » Will miss the remainder of the season with an injury suffered in the season opener against Nebraska
- » Seven tackles, including 1.5 TFL, in his first career start vs. #5 Clemson 11/9/19
- » Played linebacker and safety at American Heritage High School for head coach and former Pro Bowler Pat Surtain



## 46 ALEC McEACHERN

LB, 6-1, 225, JR.

PLAINFIELD, ILL. / BENET ACADEMY

- » Awarded with a scholarship by head coach Bret Bielema during team meeting 4/6/21
- » Graduated with a degree in finance
- » Enrolled in the technology management master's program



## 45 KHALAN TOLSON

LB, 6-0, 220, JR.

ST. PETERSBURG, FLA. / ADMIRAL FARRAGUT ACADEMY

- » Missed the final two games of 2020 with an injury
- » Streak of 10 straight starts snapped at Northwestern 12/12/20 (out with injury)
- » Started the final four games of 2019 after Butkus Award semifinalist Jake Hansen was injured
- » Tied for the team lead in kickoff tackles (4) and third on the team in special teams tackles (6) in 2019

### DEFENSIVE STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	GP	UA	A	TOT	TFL-YD	SACKS-YD	INT	PD	FF	FR	BLK
2019	ILL	13	8	5	13	0-0	0-0	0	0	1	0	0
2020	ILL	5	12	13	25	1.5-10	1.0-9	1	1	0	1	0
2021	ILL	7	25	17	42	1.5-12	1-10	0	3	1	0	0
CAREER		25	45	35	80	3.0-22	2.0-19	1	4	2	1	0

### DEFENSIVE STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	GP	UA	A	TOT	TFL-YD	SACKS-YD	INT	PD	FF	FR	BLK
2016	ILL	12	2	6	8	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
2017	ILL	DNP - Injured										
2018	ILL	12	48	47	95	8.5-18	1-6	0	1	1	1	0
2019	ILL	9	41	31	72	7.5-38	3.5-27	1	1	7	3	0
2020	ILL	8	36	32	68	10-31	2.5-12	2	4	2	2	0
2021	ILL	5	19	14	33	2.5-13	1-5	0	0	2	1	0
CAREER		46	146	130	276	28.5-100	8.0-50	3	6	12	7	0

### DEFENSIVE STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	GP	UA	A	TOT	TFL-YD	SACKS-YD	INT	PD	FF	FR	BLK
2018	NCST	4	0	0	0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
2019	NCST	11	18	17	35	5.5-29	1.0-15	0	0	0	1	0
2020	NCST	10	6	12	18	3.0-13	2.0-11	0	0	2	0	0
2021	ILL	1	2	4	6	1.5-8	1.0-7	0	0	0	1	0
CAREER		26	26	33	59	10.0-50	4.0-33	0	0	2	2	0

### DEFENSIVE STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	GP	UA	A	TOT	TFL-YD	SACKS-YD	INT	PD	FF	FR	BLK
2018	ILL	4	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
2019	ILL	13	2	2	4	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
2020	ILL	8	4	1	5	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
2021	ILL	7	3	3	6	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
CAREER		32	9	7	16	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0

### DEFENSIVE STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	GP	UA	A	TOT	TFL-YD	SACKS-YD	INT	PD	FF	FR	BLK
2018	ILL	12	3	2	5	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
2019	ILL	11	23	15	38	1.5-4	0-0	0	2	0	1	0
2020	ILL	6	15	24	39	5.5-21	1.5-11	0	2	2	1	0
2021	ILL	7	19	10	29	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
CAREER		37	60	51	111	7.5-25	1.5-11	0	4	2	2	0

## Hansen Leads the Linebackers

- LB Jake Hansen initially tested the NFL Draft process before announcing his return to Illinois on March 1, 2021.
- Hansen led the nation in takeaways over the span of two seasons from 2019-20 (14).
- Hansen is one of only two FBS players with 200+ tackles, 25+ TFLs and 10+ forced fumbles (Ali Fayad, Western Michigan).
- Hansen is the active FBS leader in career forced fumbles (12).
- Hansen ranks 23rd among active FBS players in career tackles (276) and 31st in TFLs (28.5).
- The NCAA granted Hansen a final year of eligibility and he is continuing pursuit of a master's degree in recreation, sport, and tourism after graduating from the University of Illinois with a degree in kinesiology in May 2020.

## ILLINOIS CAREER FORCED FUMBLES

### PLAYER FORCED FUMBLES

1. Simeon Rice, 1992-95 13
2. Jake Hansen, 2016-present 12
3. Whitney Mercilus, 2009-11 11

## MOST FORCED FUMBLES SINCE 2000

### PLAYER FORCED FUMBLES

1. Khalil Mack, Buffalo 16
2. Ryan Kerrigan, Purdue 14  
Cordarro Law, Southern Miss 14  
Chris Borland, Wisconsin 14
5. Zack Follett, California 13  
Stryker Sulak, Missouri 13
7. Jake Hansen, Illinois 12  
Five Others Tied 12





# SECONDARY



## 6 TONY ADAMS

DB, 6-0, 205, SR.

BELLEVILLE, ILL. / ST. LOUIS UNIVERSITY HS

- » Fourth-quarter interception vs. No. 6 Wisconsin 10/19/19 led to Illinois' game-winning field goal in one of the biggest upsets in Big Ten history
- » Interceptions against Wisconsin and at Purdue in 2019 to become the first Illini with interceptions in back-to-back Big Ten games since Vontae Davis and Kevin Mitchell in 2007



## 29 CHRISTIAN BOBAK

DB, 6-0, 195, SR.

HINSDALE, ILL. / HINSDALE CENTRAL

- » Awarded with a scholarship by head coach Bret Bielema during team meeting 4/6/21
- » Big Ten Distinguished Scholar in 2020
- » Graduated with an undergraduate degree in finance, enrolled in the technology management master's program

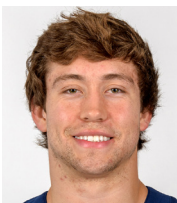


## 30 SYDNEY BROWN

DB, 6-0, 200, JR.

LONDON, ONTARIO, CANADA / ST. STEPHENS EPISCOPAL (FLA.)

- » 2019 All-Big Ten third team (coaches)
- » Father played in CFL for three seasons, mother was a figure skater
- » Identical twin brother, Chase, played football at Western Michigan one season before transferring to Illinois in 2019



## 24 PRATHER HUDSON

DB, 5-11, 205, SR.

COLUMBUS, GA. / BROOKSTONE

- » Played in 53 games at Georgia, including both games of the 2017 College Football Playoff
- » Graduated with a degree in finance from Georgia in 2019
- » Completed master's in sport management at Georgia in 2020, enrolled in the recreation, sport, and tourism graduate program



## 25 KERBY JOSEPH

DB, 6-1, 200, JR.

ORLANDO, FLA. / JONES

- » Fourth Illini since 1971 to record three interceptions and three fumble recoveries in a season
- » Interceptions in both road games (at Virginia, at Purdue) and at home against Wisconsin
- » Career-high 11 tackles vs. Nebraska 9/21/19
- » Has played both defensive back and wide receiver for Illinois



## 32 TAILON LEITZSEY

DB, 6-0, 185, SR.

LAUREL, MD. / RIVERSIDE / MISSOURI BAPTIST

- » Awarded with a scholarship by head coach Bret Bielema during team meeting 4/6/21
- » Worked two jobs and slept in his car for nearly a week prior to joining the Illinois team
- » Graduated with a bachelor's degree in Kinesiology in 2020
- » Hosted a free kids camp in the Champaign-Urbana community in the summer of 2021

### DEFENSIVE STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	GP	UA	A	TOT	TFL-YD	SACKS-YD	INT	PD	FF	FR	BLK
2017	ILL	5	4	4	8	1-1	1-1	1	1	0	0	0
2018	ILL	8	29	14	43	3.5-10	1-1	1	5	0	0	0
2019	ILL	10	29	10	39	3-6	0-0	2	3	0	0	0
2020	ILL	6	25	26	51	0-0	0-0	1	2	0	0	0
2021	ILL	7	28	11	39	2.5-14	0-0	1	4	0	0	0
CAREER		36	115	65	180	10.0-31	2.0-2	6	15	0	0	0

### DEFENSIVE STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	GP	UA	A	TOT	TFL-YD	SACKS-YD	INT	PD	FF	FR	BLK
2017	ILL	12	2	1	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
2018	ILL	12	6	3	9	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
2019	ILL	13	2	1	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
2020	ILL	6	4	3	7	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
2021	ILL	7	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
CAREER		50	15	8	23	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0

### DEFENSIVE STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	GP	UA	A	TOT	TFL-YD	SACKS-YD	INT	PD	FF	FR	BLK
2018	ILL	10	25	30	55	2-4	0-0	1	6	0	0	0
2019	ILL	11	51	37	88	2.5-3	0-0	3	4	0	0	0
2020	ILL	6	20	16	36	0.5-2	0-0	0	0	1	0	0
2021	ILL	7	30	20	50	0-0	0-0	0	2	1	0	0
CAREER		34	126	103	229	5.0-9	0-0	4	12	2	0	0

### DEFENSIVE STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	GP	UA	A	TOT	TFL-YD	SACKS-YD	INT	PD	FF	FR	BLK
2017	UGA	15	2	0	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
2018	UGA	14	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
2019	UGA	14	4	0	4	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
2020	UGA	10	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
2021	ILL	7	5	5	10	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
CAREER		60	12	6	18	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0

### DEFENSIVE STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	GP	UA	A	TOT	TFL-YD	SACKS-YD	INT	PD	FF	FR	BLK
2018	ILL	10	8	1	9	0-0	0-0	0	1	0	0	0
2019	ILL	10	13	17	30	1-2	0-0	0	3	0	0	0
2020	ILL	7	12	7	19	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
2021	ILL	7	24	12	36	0-0	0-0	3	5	0	3	0
CAREER		34	57	37	94	1.0-2	0-0	3	9	0	3	0

### DEFENSIVE STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	GP	UA	A	TOT	TFL-YD	SACKS-YD	INT	PD	FF	FR	BLK
2020	ILL	1	0	0	0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
2021	ILL	3	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
CAREER		4	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0



# SECONDARY



## 21 JARTAVIUS MARTIN

DB, 6-0, 195, JR.

LEHIGH ACRES, FLA. / LEHIGH ACRES

» Goes by "Quan"

» Career-high 12 tackles at Northwestern 12/12/20

» Became the second Illinois true freshman cornerback to start the first two games of the season since 1980 in 2018, joining Vontae Davis (2006)



## 23 TAHVEON NICHOLSON

DB, 5-11, 175, R-FR.

JACKSONVILLE, FLA. / LEE

» Goes by "Taz"

» Attended Palmetto Prep Academy for one year following high school and played defensive back and wide receiver



## 4 DERRICK SMITH

DB, 6-2, 220, JR.

JACKSONVILLE, FLA. / TRINITY CATHOLIC / MIAMI (FLA.)

» First career Illini start in the 2019 season opener at Wisconsin

» Participated in training camp at Miami (Fla.) in 2019 before transferring to Illinois in August 2019 and sitting out the season due to NCAA transfer rules

» Has been boxing since middle school



## 8 EDDIE SMITH

DB, 6-0, 200, SO.

SLIDELL, LA. / SALMEN

» Graduated with a degree in communication from Alabama in 2021

» Enrolled in the recreation, sport, and tourism master's program

» Fiancé, Jordan Lewis, plays basketball at Baylor



## 7 KENDALL SMITH

DB, 6-1, 200, SR.

BOLINGBROOK, ILL. / BOLINGBROOK

» First significant playing time was against Iowa in 2020 after DB Nate Hobbs left with an injury

» Has played both wide receiver and defensive back at Illinois

» Ranked No. 9 recruit in Illinois by ESPN coming out of Bolingbrook



## 31 DEVON WITHERSPOON

DB, 6-0, 180, SO.

PENSACOLA, FLA. / PINE FOREST

» Only true freshman defender to start a game for Illinois in 2019

» Chase-down tackle at the goal line in the fourth quarter vs. No. 6 Wisconsin 10/19/19 led to goal-line stop to help Illinois win 24-23 and complete one of the biggest upsets in Big Ten history

» Joined the Illini during 2019 training camp after initially attending Hutchinson CC (Kan.)

### DEFENSIVE STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	GP	UA	A	TOT	TFL-YD	SACKS-YD	INT	PD	FF	FR	BLK
2018	ILL	10	25	17	42	1.5-4	0-0	3	6	0	0	0
2019	ILL	12	14	9	23	2-6	0-0	0	0	0	2	0
2020	ILL	8	25	13	38	0-0	0-0	0	2	1	0	0
2021	ILL	7	22	16	38	0.5-3	0-0	0	4	1	0	0
CAREER		37	86	55	141	4.0-13	0-0	3	12	2	2	0

### DEFENSIVE STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	GP	UA	A	TOT	TFL-YD	SACKS-YD	INT	PD	FF	FR	BLK
2021	ILL	6	9	2	11	0-0	0-0	0	2	0	0	0
CAREER		6	9	2	11	0-0	0-0	0	2	0	0	0

### DEFENSIVE STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	GP	UA	A	TOT	TFL-YD	SACKS-YD	INT	PD	FF	FR	BLK
2017	MIA-FL	13	10	3	13	1.0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
2018	MIA-FL	12	6	5	11	0.5	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
2020	ILL	8	15	7	22	1.0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
2021	ILL	5	9	7	16	0.0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
CAREER		38	40	22	62	2.5	0-0	0	0	0	0	0

### DEFENSIVE STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	GP	UA	A	TOT	TFL-YD	SACKS-YD	INT	PD	FF	FR	BLK
2018	ALA	7	0	0	0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
2019	ALA	1	0	0	0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
2020	ALA	2	0	0	0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
2021	ILL	6	0	0	0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
CAREER		16	0	0	0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0

### DEFENSIVE STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	GP	UA	A	TOT	TFL-YD	SACKS-YD	INT	PD	FF	FR	BLK
2017	ILL	12	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
2018	ILL	10	6	4	10	0-0	0-0	0	0	1	0	0
2019	ILL	2	0	0	0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
2020	ILL	8	3	4	7	0-0	0-0	0	1	0	0	0
2021	ILL	7	3	3	6	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
CAREER		39	12	12	24	0-0	0-0	0	1	1	0	0

### DEFENSIVE STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	GP	UA	A	TOT	TFL-YD	SACKS-YD	INT	PD	FF	FR	BLK
2019	ILL	13	23	10	33	0-0	0-0	0	2	0	0	0
2020	ILL	7	19	14	33	1-4	0-0	2	2	1	3	0
2021	ILL	3	17	1	18	2-2	0-0	0	5	0	0	0
CAREER		23	59	25	84	3.0-6	0-0	2	9	1	3	0





# SPECIALISTS



## 14 BLAKE HAYES

P, 6-6, 225, SR.

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA / BRIGHTON GRAMMAR

- » Big Ten Special Teams Player of the Week 8/30/21 following four punts inside the 20 vs. Nebraska 8/28/21
- » Kramer, Hayes, and Hansen are the first three-time captains in Illinois history
- » Leads the nation in punts inside the 20 (15) and punts inside the 10 (11)
- » 2019 Big Ten Punter of the Year
- » Graduated with a degree in Kinesiology in May 2020, enrolled in the public health master's program



## 17 JAMES MCCOURT

K, 6-1, 215, SR.

PARKLAND, FLA. / ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

- » Born in Dublin, Ireland
- » Illinois record holder for career 50+-yard field goals made
- » Second in the nation in 50+-yard field goals made this season
- » Sixth in the nation in kickoff touchback rate (89.3%, 25-28)
- » Graduated with a degree in finance in May 2020, enrolled in the management master's program



## 56 ETHAN TABEL

LS, 6-0, 230, SR.

BARRINGTON, ILL. / BARRINGTON

- » No. 2 NFL Draft long snapper prospect in the nation by Mel Kiper in 2021
- » Bilingual in German
- » Talented sketch artist
- » Graduated with a degree in advertising, enrolled in the technology management master's program

### PUNTING STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	G	NO.	YDS	LG	AVG	TB	FC	I20	50+	BLK
2017	ILL	12	77	3231	64	42.0	2	16	22	10	0
2018	ILL	12	62	2701	69	43.6	5	10	21	14	2
2019	ILL	13	77	3437	70	44.6	2	14	32	22	1
2020	ILL	8	42	1838	62	43.8	1	12	16	9	0
2021	ILL	7	39	1775	80	45.5	1	13	17	10	0
CAREER		52	297	12982	80	43.7	11	65	108	65	3

### KICKING STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	PAT	FG	0-29	30-39	40-49	50+	PTS	LG
2018	ILL	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0
2019	ILL	42-43	13-19	2-2	4-6	3-6	4-5	81	57
2020	ILL	15-15	6-10	4-4	1-2	1-2	0-2	33	47
2021	ILL	14-14	8-12	2-3	2-2	1-1	3-6	39	53
CAREER		71-72	27-40	8-9	7-10	5-9	7-13	153	57

### GAMES PLAYED STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	G
2017	ILL	11
2018	ILL	12
2019	ILL	13
2020	ILL	8
2021	ILL	7
CAREER		51

## The Lads: One of the Top Special Teams Units in the Nation

- Illinois returned 100% of its specialist unit, led by **Blake Hayes**, **James McCourt**, and **Ethan Tabel**, plus back-up kicker **Caleb Griffin**, back-up punter **Hugh Robertson**, and back-up long snapper **Aidan Hall**. The special teams unit is nicknamed "The Lads."
- Illinois is eighth in the nation in net punting (44.1).
- **James McCourt** became the first kicker in Illini history to hit two 50+-yard field goals in a game when he made a 53- and 52-yarder against UTSA 9/4/21.
  - » McCourt is Illinois' career record holder with seven career 50+-yard field goals made. He made his seventh against Purdue 9/25/21.
- **McCourt** is one of only four kickers in Illini history with two game-winning field goals in the final minute.
  - » Game-winning 47-yard field goal with 0:03 left at Rutgers 11/14/20
  - » 39-yard field goal as time expired beat No. 6 Wisconsin 10/19/19 to finish the largest upset over a ranked team in the Big Ten in the last 40 seasons
- **Blake Hayes** will own nearly every punting record in Illinois history by the time he leaves Champaign.
  - » Hayes is Illinois' all-time leader in punting average, total punts, punt yards, and punts inside the 20

### ILLINOIS RECORDS

#### CAREER PUNTING AVERAGE

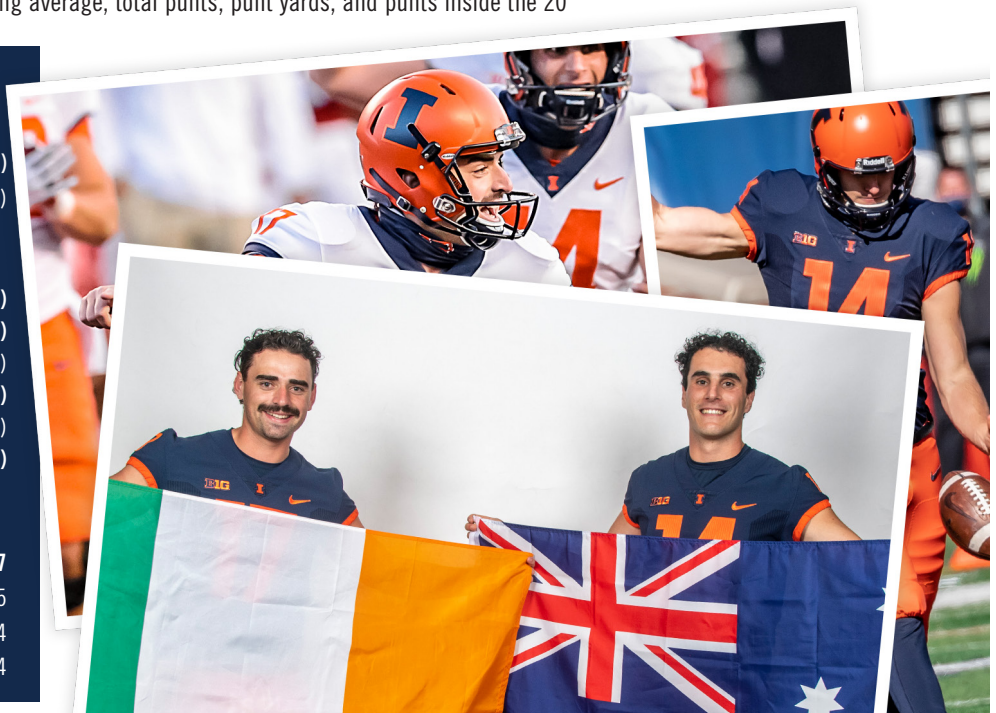
1. **Blake Hayes, 2017-21** . . . . 43.71 (297-12,656)
2. Steve Weatherford, 2002-05 . . . 43.53 (193-8,402)

#### SEASON PUNTS INSIDE THE 20 PERCENTAGE

1. **Blake Hayes, 2021** . . . . . 43.6% (17/39)
2. **Blake Hayes, 2019** . . . . . 41.6% (32/77)
3. Steve Weatherford, 2004 . . . . . 40.4% (23/57)
4. **Blake Hayes, 2020** . . . . . 38.1% (16/42)
5. Ryan Frain, 2016 . . . . . 34.0% (18/53)
6. **Blake Hayes, 2018** . . . . . 33.9% (21/62)

#### CAREER 50+ YARD FIELD GOALS

1. **James McCourt, 2019-21** . . . . . 7
2. Chase McLaughlin, 2014-18 . . . . . 5
3. Jason Reda, 2004-07 . . . . . 4
4. Dan Beaver, 1973-76 . . . . . 4



## THE MOST GRADUATES IN THE NATION

The 2021 Fighting Illini roster features 28 student-athletes that already earned degrees, the most of any team in the nation.

Student-Athlete	Bachelor's Degree	Degree Pursuing
Tony Adams	Political Science (Dec. '20)	Communication (second bachelor's)
Jafar Armstrong	Business (2021 at Notre Dame)	Recreation, Sport, and Tourism (second bachelor's)
Jack Badovinac	Political Science (May '21 at Colgate)	Strategic Brand Communication
Christian Bobak	Finance (May '20)	Technology Management
Owen Carney Jr.	Communication (May '20)	Recreation, Sport, and Tourism
Sean Coughlan	Accountancy and Finance (May '21)	Accountancy
Desmond Dan Jr.	Individualized Studies (2020 at New Mexico State)	Recreation, Sport, and Tourism
Mike Epstein	Marketing (May '21)	Strategic Brand Communication
Caleb Griffin	Marketing and Management (Aug. '21)	Management
Jake Hansen	Kinesiology (May '20)	Recreation, Sport, and Tourism
Chase Hayden	Business Marketing (July '20 at Arkansas)	Strategic Brand Communication
Blake Hayes	Kinesiology (May '21)	Public Health
Prather Hudson	Finance (Fall 2019 at Georgia)	Recreation, Sport, and Tourism (also Earned Sports Management master's from Georgia in 2020)
Blake Jerasaty	Economics and Finance (2020 at Wofford)	Finance
Ryan Johnson	Finance/Risk Management (2021 at Northern Michigan)	Strategic Brand Communication
Doug Kramer	Finance (May '20)	Recreation, Sport, and Tourism
Tailon Leitzsey	Kinesiology (Dec. '20)	Communication (second bachelor's)
Michael Marchese	Economics (May '21)	Management
James McCourt	Finance (May '20)	Management
Alec McEachern	Finance (May '21)	Technology Management
Donny Navarro III	Information Sciences (May '21)	Technology Management
Roderick Perry	Business Management (2020 at S.C. State)	Recreation, Sport, and Tourism
Brandon Peters	General Studies (June '19 at Michigan)	Strategic Brand Communication (also Earned Recreation, Sport and Tourism master's in Dec. 2020)
Alex Pihlstrom	Recreation, Sport, and Tourism (May '21)	Strategic Brand Communication
Max Rosenthal	Advertising Management (May '21 at Michigan State)	Strategic Brand Communication
Eddie Smith	Communication (2021 at Alabama)	Recreation, Sport, and Tourism
Ethan Tabel	Advertising (May '20)	Germanic Studies (also Earned Technology Management master's in Aug. 2021)
Peyton Vining	Health Exercise and Sport Studies (2021 at Denison)	Recreation, Sport, and Tourism

## ACADEMIC MAJORS – FALL 2021

<b>Tony Adams</b> . . . . . Communication (Second Bachelor's)	Aidan Hall . . . . . Systems Engineering and Design	Deon Pate . . . . . Sociology
Lucas Althaus . . . . . Agribusiness Markets and Management	<b>Jake Hansen</b> . . . . . Recreation, Sport, and Tourism (Master's)	Julian Pearl . . . . . Sociology
<b>Jafar Armstrong</b> . . . . . Recreation, Sport, and Tourism (Second Bachelor's)	Lane Hansen . . . . . Kinesiology	<b>Roderick Perry</b> . . . . . Recreation, Sport, and Tourism (Master's)
Calvin Avery . . . . . Sociology	Calvin Hart . . . . . General Studies	<b>Brandon Peters</b> . . . . . Strategic Brand Communication (Master's)
<b>Jack Badovinac</b> . . . . . Strategic Brand Communication (Master's)	<b>Chase Hayden</b> . . . . . Strategic Brand Communication (Master's)	<b>Alex Pihlstrom</b> . . . . . Strategic Brand Communication (Master's)
Daniel Barker . . . . . Communication	<b>Blake Hayes</b> . . . . . Public Health (Master's)	Josh Plohr . . . . . Recreation, Sport, and Tourism
Zachary Barlev . . . . . Mathematics	Owen Hickey . . . . . General Studies	Mako Rajkovic . . . . . General Studies
Bryce Barnes . . . . . Community Health	Brian Hightower . . . . . Recreation, Sport, and Tourism	Keith Randolph Jr. . . . . Recreation, Sport, and Tourism
Tarique Barnes . . . . . Advertising	Ezekiel Holmes . . . . . Sociology	Tip Reiman . . . . . Kinesiology
Keion Battle . . . . . Chemistry	<b>Prather Hudson</b> . . . . . Recreation, Sport, and Tourism (Master's)	Hugh Robertson . . . . . Finance
Marques Beason . . . . . Recreation, Sport, and Tourism	<b>Blake Jerasaty</b> . . . . . Finance (Master's)	Matt Robinson . . . . . Recreation, Sport, and Tourism
<b>Christian Bobak</b> . . . . . Technology Management (Master's)	DJ Johnson . . . . . Food Science and Human Nutrition	<b>Max Rosenthal</b> . . . . . Strategic Brand Communication (Master's)
Matt Bobak . . . . . Community Health	<b>Ryan Johnson</b> . . . . . Strategic Brand Communication (Master's)	Dylan Rosiek . . . . . Kinesiology
Chase Brown . . . . . Communication	Jaden Jones-Watkins . . . . . Communication	Carlos Sandy . . . . . Communication
Sydney Brown . . . . . Recreation, Sport, and Tourism	Kerby Joseph . . . . . Community Health	Ben Schultz . . . . . Agribusiness Markets and Management
Verdis Brown . . . . . African American Studies	Evan Kirts . . . . . Recreation, Sport, and Tourism	Miles Scott . . . . . Kinesiology
Pat Bryant . . . . . Recreation, Sport, and Tourism	<b>Doug Kramer</b> . . . . . Recreation, Sport, and Tourism (Master's)	Artur Sitkowski . . . . . Communication
Dalevon Campbell . . . . . Advertising	Josh Kreutz . . . . . General Studies	Jordyn Slaughter . . . . . Sociology
<b>Owen Carney Jr.</b> . . . . . Recreation, Sport, and Tourism (Master's)	<b>Tailon Leitzsey</b> . . . . . Communication (Second Bachelor's)	Derrick Smith . . . . . Communication
Michael Cerniglia . . . . . Recreation, Sport, and Tourism	Ty Lindenman . . . . . Agriculture and Consumer Economics	<b>Eddie Smith</b> . . . . . Recreation, Sport, and Tourism (Master's)
<b>Sean Coughlan</b> . . . . . Accountancy (Master's)	Reggie Love . . . . . General Studies	Kendall Smith . . . . . Learning and Education Studies
Seth Coleman . . . . . Recreation, Sport, and Tourism	Vederian Lowe . . . . . Communication	DD Snyder . . . . . General Studies
Samari Collier . . . . . General Studies	Mike Manning . . . . . Psychology	Deuce Spann . . . . . Recreation, Sport, and Tourism
Shammond Cooper . . . . . Recreation, Sport, and Tourism	<b>Michael Marchese</b> . . . . . Management (Master's)	Tyler Strain . . . . . General Studies
Thomas Cronin . . . . . History	Jartavius Martin . . . . . Communication	<b>Ethan Tabel</b> . . . . . Germanic Studies (Second Bachelor's)
Kionte Curry . . . . . General Studies	Sed McConnell . . . . . General Studies	Coran Taylor . . . . . Communication
<b>Desmond Dan Jr.</b> . . . . . Recreation, Sport, and Tourism (Master's)	<b>James McCourt</b> . . . . . Management (Master's)	Khari Thompson . . . . . Recreation, Sport, and Tourism
Isaac Darkangelo . . . . . Communication	Josh McCray . . . . . General Studies	Khalan Tolson . . . . . Communication
Daniel Edwards . . . . . General Studies	<b>Alec McEachern</b> . . . . . Technology Management (Master's)	Kalen Villanueva . . . . . General Studies
Preston Engel . . . . . Recreation, Sport, and Tourism	Ryan Meed . . . . . Kinesiology	<b>Peyton Vining</b> . . . . . Recreation, Sport, and Tourism (Master's)
<b>Mike Epstein</b> . . . . . Strategic Brand Communication (Master's)	Griffin Moore . . . . . Recreation, Sport, and Tourism	Casey Washington . . . . . Recreation, Sport, and Tourism
Nick Fedanzo . . . . . Communication	<b>Donny Navarro</b> . . . . . Technology Management (Master's)	Joriell Washington . . . . . Community Health
Luke Ford . . . . . Recreation, Sport, and Tourism	Jer'Zhan Newton . . . . . General Studies	Isaiah Williams . . . . . Recreation, Sport, and Tourism
Isaiah Gay . . . . . Learning and Education Studies	Tahveen Nicholson . . . . . General Studies	Brody Wisecarver . . . . . General Studies
Josh Gesky . . . . . General Studies	Jakari Norwood . . . . . Recreation, Sport, and Tourism	Devon Witherspoon . . . . . Communication
Prince Green . . . . . General Studies	Kenenna Odeluga . . . . . Business	Jamal Woods . . . . . Community Health
<b>Caleb Griffin</b> . . . . . Management (Master's)	Moses Okpala . . . . . Psychology	Terry Zapf . . . . . Economics
Devin Hale . . . . . General Studies	Alex Palczewski . . . . . Kinesiology	Luke Zardzin . . . . . Recreation, Sport, and Tourism





# SMITH FOOTBALL CENTER



## The Standard of Excellence

*Opened in 2019, The Henry Dale and Betty Smith Football Center is a 107,650 square foot facility adjoining the south end of the Irwin Indoor Practice Facility. The facility features new and expanded strength and conditioning and sports medicine space, coaches' offices, position meeting rooms, player development areas, locker rooms, and other areas for recruiting and prospect hosting.*







# BRET BIELEMA

- HEAD COACH
- IOWA '92
- FIRST SEASON AT ILLINOIS

## THE BIELEMA FILE

### HOMETOWN

Prophetstown, Illinois

### BIRTHDATE

January 13, 1970

### FAMILY

Wife: Jen

Daughters: Briella and Brexli

### EDUCATION

B.S., marketing — Iowa, 1992

### PLAYING EXPERIENCE

Iowa, 1989-92

Signed free-agent contract with the Seattle Seahawks, 1993

Milwaukee Mustangs, Arena Football League, 1994

### BOWL COACHING EXPERIENCE

2016 Belk Bowl

2015 Liberty Bowl

2014 Texas Bowl

2012 Rose Bowl

2011 Rose Bowl

2009 Champs Sports Bowl

2008 Champs Sports Bowl

2008 Outback Bowl

2007 Capital One Bowl

2006 Capital One Bowl

2005 Outback Bowl

2004 Fiesta Bowl

2002 Holiday Bowl

2001 Alamo Bowl

1997 Sun Bowl

1996 Alamo Bowl

1995 Sun Bowl

Bret Bielema was named as the 26th Fighting Illini Head Football Coach in the 132-year history of the program in December 2020.

A native of Prophetstown, Illinois, Bielema (pronounced BEEL-ma) has 24 years of collegiate coaching experience and compiled a 12-year record of 97-58 (.626) as head coach at Wisconsin and Arkansas.

From 2006-12 Bielema was the head coach at Wisconsin, where he led the Badgers to three Big Ten championships (2010-12), six consecutive bowl games and a 68-24 record (.739). Bielema then spent five seasons as head coach at Arkansas from 2013-17. After inheriting a depleted roster and enduring a difficult first season, he led the Razorbacks to three consecutive bowl games, including victories against Texas in 2014 and Kansas State in 2015.

In Bielema's debut season at Wisconsin in 2006, the Badgers finished 12-1, including a victory in the Capital One Bowl against Arkansas. He was the first coach in Big Ten history to win 10 games in his first season, the first Wisconsin coach to win 11 games prior to a bowl game and became the third coach in NCAA history to win 12 games in his first season. Bielema won 17 of his first 18 games with the Badgers. The Badgers shared or won Big Ten championships three straight seasons from 2010-12 and led Wisconsin to victories in the first two Big Ten championship games.

Bielema's coaching pedigree and list of football mentors matches that of any coach in the nation. He played for and coached under Hall-of-Famer Hayden Fry, helping the Hawkeyes share the 1990 Big Ten title with Illinois. After two years as a graduate assistant and six seasons as linebacker coach at Iowa, Bielema spent two years as Co-Defensive Coordinator at Kansas State under Hall-of-Famer Bill Snyder, helping the Wildcats win the 2003 Big 12 Championship.

Two seasons later, he was named Defensive Coordinator at Wisconsin under Hall-of-Famer Barry Alvarez and moved into the head coaching role of the Badgers in 2006 when Alvarez retired.

Bielema has spent the last three seasons in the National Football League. His first two seasons in the NFL were with the New England Patriots as a consultant to six-time Super Bowl champion head coach Bill Belichick in 2018 and as the team's defensive line coach in 2019, when the Patriots won the AFC East with a 12-4 record and had the NFL's best defense. In Bielema's first season with the Patriots, New England was 11-5 and defeated the Los Angeles Rams in Super Bowl LIII. He has been the outside linebackers coach and senior assistant for the New York Giants during the 2020 season.

Bielema was a defensive lineman at Iowa from 1989-92, when he was a four-time letterman under Fry. After joining the team as a walk-on, Bielema earned a scholarship after his first year, started as a junior and was named a team captain for his senior season. Bielema graduated from Iowa in 1992 with a bachelor's degree in marketing.

Following his graduation, Bielema signed a free-agent contract with the Seattle Seahawks and ended his playing career in 1994 as a member of the Milwaukee Mustangs of the Arena Football League.

He and his wife, Jen, have two daughters, Briella Nicole and Brexli Nichole.

## YEAR-BY-YEAR

2021	Illinois	Head Coach
2020	New York Giants	Outside Linebackers, Senior Assistant Coach
2019	New England Patriots	Defensive Line
2018	New England Patriots	Consultant to the Head Coach
2013-17	Arkansas	Head Coach (29-34)
2006-12	Wisconsin	Head Coach (68-24)
2004-05	Wisconsin	Defensive Coordinator
2002-03	Kansas State	Co-Defensive Coordinator
1996-2001	Iowa	Linebackers
1994-95	Iowa	Graduate Assistant

## HEAD COACHING RECORD

YEAR	TEAM	W-L	POSTSEASON
2006	Wisconsin	12-1 (.923)	Capital One Bowl
2007	Wisconsin	9-4 (.692)	Outback Bowl
2008	Wisconsin	7-6 (.538)	Champs Sports Bowl
2009	Wisconsin	10-3 (.769)	Champs Sports Bowl
2010	Wisconsin	11-2 (.846)	Rose Bowl
2011	Wisconsin	11-3 (.786)	Rose Bowl
2012	Wisconsin	8-5 (.615)	(Did not coach Rose Bowl)
2013	Arkansas	3-9 (.250)	
2014	Arkansas	7-6 (.538)	Texas Bowl
2015	Arkansas	8-5 (.615)	Liberty Bowl
2016	Arkansas	7-6 (.538)	Belk Bowl
2017	Arkansas	4-8 (.333)	
2021	Illinois	2-5 (.286)	

**TOTAL: 13TH YEAR // OVERALL: 99-63 // BIG TEN: 38-22**







# OFFENSIVE ASSISTANTS



## TONY PETERSEN

### OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR/QUARTERBACKS

Petersen has directed some of the nation's most exciting and prolific offenses during his 30-year college coaching career, serving as an offensive coordinator in the Big Ten, MAC, Conference USA, American and Sun Belt prior to taking the reins of the Fighting Illini offense. Petersen spent the 2020 season as offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach at Appalachian State, when the Mountaineers finished 9-3 overall with a Myrtle Beach Bowl victory over North Texas on December 21. App State averaged 452 yards in total offense (26th nationally), including 264.9 rushing yards (7th nationally), on the season. He moved to App State after spending the 2019 season as an offensive analyst at Missouri following three-year stints coordinating successful offenses at Marshall (2010-12), Louisiana Tech (2013-15) and East Carolina (2016-18). He has helped lead his teams to 13 bowl games, seven conference championships and two FCS national championships throughout his coaching career. Petersen and his wife, Beth, have three children: Andy, Nikki Nelson and Taylor.



## GEORGE MCDONALD

### ASSISTANT HEAD COACH/WIDE RECEIVERS

George McDonald returns to his alma mater following six seasons at N.C. State and with experience in three Power-5 conferences and the NFL. McDonald began his coaching career as a graduate assistant at Ball State before earning his first full-time position at Northern Illinois from 2001-03. While in DeKalb, he coached First-Team All-MAC receiver, and current Minnesota head coach, P.J. Fleck, second-team All-American Dan Sheldon, and All-American Darrell "The Thrill" Hill. McDonald was a four-year letterwinner at receiver for the Fighting Illini and completed his Illinois football career with 57 receptions for 589 yards and four touchdowns. He led the Big Ten in kickoff return yardage in 1996 (736) while returning 57 kickoffs for 1,276 yards (22.4 avg.) during his career. McDonald also ran track his freshman and senior years, earning All-Big Ten honors his senior year when he set an Illinois record with a time of 6.74 in the 60 meters, a mark that still ranks seventh on the Illini top times list, to win the 1999 Big Ten Indoor Championships 60m title. He earned his bachelor's degree in health planning and administration from Illinois in 1999. He and his wife, the former Heather Anderson, have two sons, Roman and Maverick.



## BART MILLER

### OFFENSIVE LINE

Bart Miller joins Bret Bielema's coaching staff for the second time and comes to Champaign-Urbana after two successful seasons as offensive line coach and offensive run-game coordinator at Wyoming. Miller's first full-time coaching position came as the offensive line coach at Wisconsin under Bielema in 2012. He took over the offensive line unit in September of 2012 after serving as a graduate assistant coach the previous season at Wisconsin. The Badgers ranked No. 13 in the nation in rushing offense in 2012, averaging 236.36 rushing yards per game. Wisconsin won its third straight Big Ten Championship that season, defeating Nebraska 70-31 in the Big Ten Championship Game, and played in a third consecutive Rose Bowl. At Wisconsin, Miller coached First Team All-Big Ten selections Travis Frederick (center) and Rick Wagner (left tackle) in 2012. Miller played football and graduated from Elk Grove High School in the Chicago area prior to completing his bachelor's degree in organizational communication from New Mexico in 2007. He obtained a master's degree in education from New Mexico State in 2011. Originally from Omaha, Nebraska, Miller and his wife, Amy, have two sons, Barrett and Gunner.



## BEN MILLER

### SPECIAL TEAMS COORDINATOR/TIGHT ENDS

Ben Miller spent the previous 14 seasons as an assistant coach at Air Force. A 2002 Air Force Academy graduate, Miller spent the 2006 season as the offensive graduate assistant at Illinois under Ron Zook before returning to the Academy. He spent nine seasons as the running backs coach and 13 years coaching the specialists, including the last 10 as the special teams coordinator. His nine years working with Falcon running backs was highly successful. He oversaw the progress of first-year starter Cody Getz, who rushed for 1,248 yards in 2012. Miller also coached Jacobi Owens, who posted back-to-back 1,000-yard rushing seasons in 2014 and 2015, while topping 3,000 yards in his career. Miller was an all-conference offensive lineman for the Falcons, starting at left tackle as a junior and senior. After completing his collegiate career, Miller signed a contract with the Cleveland Browns, where he was used as a fullback/tight end/long snapper. Miller is married to the former Meghan Carney. The couple has two daughters, Quinn and Keeley, and a son, Lochlan.



## CORY PATTERSON

### RUNNING BACKS

Cory Patterson is in his fourth season as an assistant coach at Illinois in 2021. Illinois head football coach Bret Bielema retained Patterson on his coaching staff, changing roles to running backs coach. Patterson spent his first three seasons with the Illini as tight ends coach after three seasons as the highly successful head coach at Trinity Catholic High School in St. Louis. Patterson helped Illinois to the 2019 Redbox Bowl, the program's first bowl in five years. Patterson has been key to Illinois' recruiting efforts, specifically in St. Louis. Two of the highest rated recruits in the modern era have signed from St. Louis since the arrival of Patterson. Isaiah Williams, Patterson's quarterback at Trinity, and Shammond Cooper, Trinity's star linebacker, both came to Champaign-Urbana in 2019 as four-star prospects and top 150 recruits in the nation. Patterson is a 2002 finance graduate of Lindenwood University in St. Charles, Missouri. Patterson and his wife Tiffany have two daughters, Nyla and Nori.

## GRADUATE ASSISTANTS/ANALYSTS

Reggie Bain - Graduate Assistant Coach, Offense

Taylor Reed - Graduate Assistant Coach, Offense

Adam Kleffner - Offensive Analyst

# DEFENSIVE ASSISTANTS



## **RYAN WALTERS** DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR

One of the nation's top young coaches, Walters arrived at Illinois following six seasons at Missouri, including three years as the Tigers' defensive coordinator and two years as co-defensive coordinator. Walters has had an impressive run at Missouri where he has overseen an impressive transformation of the Tiger defense into one of the SEC's top units. In 2019, Walters' defense ranked in the nation's Top 20 in several major categories, including total defense (14th NCAA/3rd SEC – 312.0 avg) and scoring defense (17th NCAA/6th SEC – 19.4 avg.), while excelling as a Top 10 pass defense (eighth in passing yards allowed NCAA/2nd SEC – 179.3 avg.). A native of Aurora, Colorado, Walters played collegiately at Colorado, where he was a standout safety for the Buffaloes (2004-08). He began his coaching career as a student assistant at Colorado working with the secondary in 2009, and then spent two years on staff at Arizona, where he was a graduate assistant in 2010 before being promoted to defensive backs coach for the 2011 season. Walters and his wife Tara have two sons, Aaron and Cason.



## **KEVIN KANE** ASSOCIATE HEAD COACH/OUTSIDE LINEBACKERS

Kevin Kane reunites with Bielema following three seasons leading a stingy defense at SMU as defensive coordinator and linebackers coach. Kane joined the SMU staff in 2018 and in his first two seasons led the Mustangs to several national top 25 rankings, including the No. 1 ranking for sacks per game (3.92) and No. 3 ranking in tackles for loss (8.5 avg) in 2019. He made the move to SMU after spending the 2016 and 2017 seasons as the defensive coordinator at Northern Illinois. That was his second stint at NIU, having served in multiple capacities for the Huskies from 2011-14. Kane helped the Huskies to five bowl appearances during his time in DeKalb, including a win in the 2012 GoDaddy.com Bowl over Arkansas State, and three MAC Championships. During the 2015 season, Kane coached linebackers at Kansas. A 2006 graduate of Kansas, Kane played linebacker for the Jayhawks, earning All-Big 12 honorable mention accolades from the Associated Press as a junior and senior. He and wife Theresa have two sons, Jack and Colin, and one daughter, Nora.



## **ANDY BUH** LINEBACKERS

Andy Buh brings 23 years of collegiate coaching experience to Champaign-Urbana including four different stops as defensive coordinator in three Power-5 conferences. Bielema and Buh spent the 2012 season together at Wisconsin helping the Badgers win the Big Ten Championship. He makes the move to Illinois after spending the 2020 season as outside linebackers coach at Arizona. Buh also spent time in the Big Ten as defensive coordinator and linebackers coach at Rutgers in 2019 and three years as defensive coordinator at Maryland from 2016-18. He also served as a coordinator earlier in his career at California, Nevada and Stanford. Buh had a successful three-year run at Maryland, guiding a Terrapins defense that collected 37 sacks in 2016. Buh's defense allowed just one 300-yard passer in his first season at Maryland and allowed just 212.3 passing yards per game on the season. The following year, Buh's defense collected 10 interceptions and saw four players earn All-Big Ten honors. A native of Escondido, California, Buh and his wife, Kelly, have two sons, Luke and Logan. He earned his bachelor's degree in physical education at Nevada in 1995.



## **TERRANCE JAMISON** DEFENSIVE LINE

Terrance Jamison joined the Illini staff after one season at Purdue. A two-time graduate of Wisconsin, Jamison played on the defensive line for the Badgers from 2005-07 under Bielema before knee injuries forced him to the sidelines, and combined to serve four seasons as a student assistant (2008-09), quality control assistant (2011) and a graduate assistant (2012). Prior to making the move to Purdue in 2020, Jamison spent the 2019 season at Air Force in a similar role, where he helped the Falcons to an 11-2 record that included a 31-21 victory over Washington State in the Cheez-It Bowl. That Air Force defensive unit finished in the top 20 nationally in a number of categories, including rushing defense (7th, 100.5), defensive touchdowns (12th, 3), total defense (17th, 319.6) and scoring defense (20th, 19.8). A native of Riverdale, Illinois, who graduated from Thornton Township High School, Jamison has two degrees from Wisconsin, a bachelor's in agricultural business management (2009) and a master's in educational leadership and policy analysis (2011). He and his wife, Ashley, have two daughters, Ava and Mackenzie, and one son, Jayce.



## **AARON HENRY** DEFENSIVE BACKS

Aaron Henry, who was a standout player and coached under Bielema at Wisconsin and Arkansas, respectively, makes the move to Champaign-Urbana after SEC, ACC and Big Ten stops at Vanderbilt, North Carolina State and Rutgers. Henry played under Bielema at Wisconsin where he was a All-Big Ten defensive back, earning 32 starts from 2007-11, and helping lead the Badgers to consecutive Big Ten titles and Rose Bowl appearances as a junior and senior. Henry spent the 2020 season as cornerbacks coach at Vanderbilt after three seasons at North Carolina State. He worked under Commodore and Wolfpack defensive coordinator Ted Roof at both schools, and helped NC State to a 9-3 record and Gator Bowl appearance in 2018. Henry has coached in three bowl games, including the 2018 Gator Bowl, 2017 Sun Bowl and 2015 Liberty Bowl. At native of Immokalee, Florida, Henry played football and baseball at Immokalee High School. As a wide receiver and defensive back, he helped Immokalee to the 2004 Florida state title and an undefeated regular season in 2006.

## **GRADUATE ASSISTANTS/ANALYSTS**

Aaron Gonzales - Graduate Assistant Coach, Defense  
Preston Gordon - Graduate Assistant Coach, Defense  
Grant O'Brien - Defensive Analyst  
Greg Froelich - Special Teams Analyst  
Kevin Laeone Richardson II - Football Analyst  
Ryan Simerson - Football Analyst



## SERIES vs. PENN STATE

**Series:** Penn State leads, 20-5

**Last:** Penn State 56, Illinois 21  
(12/19/2020)

**Streak:** Penn State W3

**at Penn State:** Penn State leads, 10-1



### LAST MEETING

ILLINOIS.....	21
PENN STATE.....	56

DEC. 19, 2020  
BEAVER STADIUM // UNIVERSITY PARK, PA.

#### SCORING BY QUARTER

Team	1	2	3	4	F
Illinois	21	0	0	0	21
Penn State	21	21	7	7	56

#### SCORING SUMMARY

##### First Quarter

PSU: Dotson 75 yd pass from Clifford (Pinegar kick), 14:48 (1-75, 0:12)  
 ILL: Hightower 5 yd pass from Williams (McCourt kick), 11:06 (4-16, 1:36)  
 PSU: Wade 100 yd kickoff return (Pinegar kick), 10:51  
 ILL: C. Brown 12 yd run (McCourt kick), 09:50 (3-75, 1:01)  
 ILL: Barker 38 yd pass from Williams (McCourt kick), 06:10 (4-63, 1:37)  
 PSU: Levis 4 yd run (Pinegar kick), 01:13 (10-75, 4:57)

##### Second Quarter

PSU: Holmes 3 yd run (Pinegar kick), 14:04 (2-10, 0:40)  
 PSU: Lee 1 yd run (Pinegar kick), 05:32 (15-91, 6:48)  
 PSU: Dotson 70 yd pass from Clifford (Pinegar kick), 03:49 (1-70, 0:12)

##### Third Quarter

PSU: Strange 7 yd pass from Levis (Pinegar kick), 00:20 (9-68, 4:23)

##### Fourth Quarter

PSU: Holmes 1 yd run (Pinegar kick), 03:32 (10-79, 5:09)

#### TEAM STATISTICS

Category	ILL	PSU
First Downs	12	28
Rushes-Yards	38-153	53-253
Passing Yards	120	327
Comp-Att-Int	8-22-1	19-27-0
Total Yards	273	580
Punts-Avg	10-43.4	5-41.4
Kickoff Returns	0-0	2-62.5
Penalties-Yards	1-15	2-19
Fumbles-Lost	1-1	1-1
Sacks By	5-27	3-16
Third-down Conv.	4-15	4-12
Time of Possession	25:10	34:50

#### INDIVIDUAL LEADERS

**RUSHING (Carries-Yards-TD):** PSU - Lee 19-85-1, Holmes 12-77-2, Joseph 4-42-0.  
 ILL - Williams 15-102-0, C. Brown 11-30-1, Lillig 2-11-0.

**PASSING (Comp-Att-INT-TD-Yds):** PSU - Clifford 16-22-0-2-285. ILL - Williams 8-18-1-2-120.

**RECEIVING (Rec-Yards-TD):** PSU - Dotson 6-189-2, Johnson 2-42-0, Strange 4-31-1.  
 ILL - Barker 3-54-1, C. Brown 2-34-0, Campbell 1-24-0.

**TACKLE LEADERS (Tackles, TFL-Yds):** PSU - Smith 8, 3.0-8, Brisker 7, 0.0-0; Luketa 7, 0.0-0. ILL - Martin 12, 0.0-0; Hansen 9, 2.5-12; Marchese 8, 0.0-0.

### The Illinois-Penn State Series

- Penn State leads the all-time series against Illinois, 20-5, including a 10-1 advantage at Penn State.
- Last season, Penn State defeated the Illini, 56-21, in the final game of the season. QB turned WR Isaiah Williams threw for two touchdowns and rushed for 102 yards with Rod Smith serving as interim head coach.
- Illinois has won three of the last 11 meetings (2007, 2010 and 2014). Prior to 2007, Penn State had won 11 of 13 meetings, including seven in a row from 1972-2000.
- Illinois' last win over Penn State was in 2014, when David Reiser's 36-yard field goal with eight seconds left secured a 16-14 victory.
- Illinois is 1-12 all-time against Penn State teams ranked in the AP top 25, including an 0-6 record against Penn State teams ranked in the top 10. The Illini's lone win against a ranked Penn State team was a 27-20 victory vs. No. 21 Penn State 9/29/2007.
- Last 100-yard rusher vs. Penn State: **Isaiah Williams**, 102, 12/19/2020
- Last 300-yard passer vs. Penn State: **Nathan Scheelhaase**, 321, 11/2/2013
- Last 100-yard receiver vs. Penn State: **Ryan Lankford**, 104, 9/29/2012

### Illinois-Penn State Connections

- Former Illini **V'Angelo Bentley** is a graduate assistant for Penn State. Bentley is Illinois' career leader in kickoff return yardage and had the Illini's last kickoff return for a touchdown against Southern Illinois in 2013.

# BOBBY ROUNDTREE



## BOBBY ROUNDTREE PASSES AWAY

The Illini Family lost one of its inspirational leaders with the passing of former Fighting Illini football student-athlete Bobby Roundtree on July 16, 2021 in the Tampa Bay area. Roundtree, 23, suffered a serious spinal cord injury during a boating and swimming accident in Tampa Bay on May 18, 2019, and has been working on his rehabilitation there for more than 18 months, sharing much of his progress on his social media accounts.

“All of us with Illinois Athletics are shocked and saddened by the sudden passing of Bobby Roundtree,” said Illinois Director of Athletics Josh Whitman. “From his first day on campus, Bobby was a leader. His work ethic, competitive fire, and drive for excellence set him apart. Following his tragic accident, those same qualities allowed him to tackle his new challenges with the same vigor and determination that we had seen on the football field. In so doing, he continued to bring light and inspiration to the lives of those around him — and, in fact, to so many people who had never had the pleasure of meeting him.

“In the face of incredible adversity, he demonstrated he was, and always will remain, a true champion. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family. We will support them, and our players, coaches, and staff who knew him well, as we struggle to understand this terrible news and, ultimately, look to celebrate the remarkable young leader we have lost.”

## 97STRONG FLAG

Beginning with the 2021 season opener, the Illinois team will run out of the tunnel with a “97Strong” flag. Illinois defensive lineman Jamal Woods ran out the flag for the opener against Nebraska.



**ILLINI NCAA & B1G RANKINGS**

**TEAM RANKINGS (130 teams ranked)**

CATEGORY	NCAA	B1G	STAT
3rd Down Conversion Pct (130 ranked)	75	8	0.389
3rd Down Defense (130 ranked)	104	14	0.437
4th Down Conversion Pct (129 ranked)	103	11	0.4
4th Down Defense (130 ranked)	126	14	0.8
Blocked Kicks Allowed (129 ranked)	62	9	1
Blocked Punts (15 ranked)			
Blocked Punts Allowed (129 ranked)	1	1	0
Completion Percentage (130 ranked)	126	14	0.498
Defensive TDs (26 ranked)	26	3	1
Fewest Penalties (130 ranked)	25	6	32
Fewest Penalties Per Game (130 ranked)	15	3	4.57
Fewest Penalty Yards (130 ranked)	52	10	330
Fewest Penalty Yards Per Game (130 ranked)	41	10	47.14
First Downs Defense (130 ranked)	123	13	164
First Downs Offense (130 ranked)	79	8	129
Fumbles Lost (130 ranked)	40	6	3
Fumbles Recovered (118 ranked)	5	1	8
Kickoff Return Defense (130 ranked)	7	3	15
Kickoff Returns (130 ranked)	116	10	16.33
Net Punting (130 ranked)	8	4	44.1
Passes Had Intercepted (130 ranked)	9	1	2
Passes Intercepted (126 ranked)	64	7	5
Passing Offense (130 ranked)	122	14	153.7
Passing Yards Allowed (130 ranked)	107	13	264.7
Passing Yards per Comp. (130 ranked)	122	13	10.15
Punt Return Defense (130 ranked)	17	1	2.92
Punt Returns (130 ranked)	97	11	5
Red Zone Defense (128 ranked)	67	10	0.821
Red Zone Offense (130 ranked)	128	14	0.625
Rushing Defense (130 ranked)	87	13	163.1
Rushing Offense (130 ranked)	67	8	164.7
Sacks Allowed (130 ranked)	67	10	2.14
Scoring Defense (130 ranked)	65	12	24.6
Scoring Offense (129 ranked)	120	14	17.7
Tackles for Loss Allowed (130 ranked)	93	9	6.14
Team Passing Efficiency (130 ranked)	127	13	101.17
Team Passing Efficiency Defense (130 ranked)	97	14	143.65
Team Sacks (130 ranked)	70	7	2.14
Team Tackles for Loss (130 ranked)	102	12	4.6
Time of Possession (130 ranked)	64	11	29:43
Total Defense (130 ranked)	101	14	427.9
Total Offense (130 ranked)	117	13	318.4
Turnover Margin (130 ranked)	9	2	1.14
Turnovers Gained (129 ranked)	13	2	13
Turnovers Lost (130 ranked)	10	2	5
Winning Percentage (129 ranked)	109	14	0.286

**NCAA INDIVIDUAL RANKINGS (Top-75)**

CATEGORY	PLAYER	STAT	RANK
Field Goal Per Game	McCourt	1.14	59th
Fumbles Recovered	Joseph	3	1st
Interceptions Per Game	Joseph	0.4	15th
Punt Returns	Navarro	5.7	42nd
Rush Yards per Carry	McCray	5.3	49th
Sacks Per Game	Carney	0.64	60th
Total Interceptions	Joseph	3	7th

**BIG TEN INDIVIDUAL RANKINGS (Top-10)**

CATEGORY	PLAYER	STAT	RANK
Field Goals Per Game	McCourt	1.14	9th
Field Goal Percentage	McCourt	.667	10th
Fumble Recovered	Joseph	3	1st
	Coleman	1	4th
	Gay	1	4th
	Hansen	1	4th
	Hart Jr.	1	4th
Interceptions Per Game	Joseph	0.4	5th
Passing TDs	Sitkowski	6	9th
Punt Returns	Navarro	5.7	8th
Punting	Hayes	45.5	6th
Receiving Touchdowns	Barker	3	8th
Yards Per Carry	McCray	5.3	5th
Sacks Per Game	Carney Jr.	0.64	9th
Total Interceptions	Joseph	3	3rd

**AP TOP 25**

Rk	Last	Team	Conf.	W-L	Pts.	Coaches Poll	Last Week
1	1	Georgia (63)	SEC	7-0	1575	1	W 30-13 H #11 Kentucky
2	3	Cincinnati	AAC	6-0	1483	3	W 56-21 H UCF
3	4	Oklahoma	Big 12	7-0	1434	2	W 52-31 H TCU
4	5	Alabama	SEC	6-1	1393	4	W 49-9 A Mississippi State
5	6	Ohio State	Big Ten	5-1	1252	5	DNP
6	8	Michigan	Big Ten	6-0	1214	6	DNP
7	7	Penn State	Big Ten	5-1	1116	8	DNP
8	12	Oklahoma State	Big 12	6-0	1082	9	W 32-24 A #25 Texas
9	10	Michigan State	Big Ten	7-0	1076	7	W 20-15 A Indiana
10	9	Oregon	Pac-12	5-1	1054	10	W 24-17 H California
11	2	Iowa	Big Ten	6-1	1048	11	L 24-7 H Purdue
12	13	Mississippi	SEC	5-1	879	12	W 31-26 A Tennessee
13	14	Notre Dame	Ind	5-1	763	13	DNP
14	15	Coastal Carolina	Sun Belt	6-0	736	16	DNP
15	11	Kentucky	SEC	6-1	723	14	L 30-13 A #1 Georgia
16	16	Wake Forest	ACC	6-0	629	15	DNP
17	21	Texas A&M	SEC	5-2	536	17	W 35-14 A Missouri
18	22	NC State	ACC	5-1	485	18	W 33-7 A Boston College
19	NR	Auburn	SEC	5-2	397	22	W 38-23 A #17 Arkansas
20	NR	Baylor	Big 12	6-1	378	20	W 38-24 H #19 BYU
21	23	SMU	AAC	6-0	358	19	DNP
22	24	San Diego State	MWC	6-0	284	21	W 19-13 (20T) A San Jose State
23	NR	Pittsburgh	ACC	5-1	177	23	W 28-7 A Virginia Tech
24	NR	UTSA	C-USA	7-0	104	25	W 45-0 H Rice
25	NR	Purdue	Big Ten	4-2	68	RV	W 24-7 A #2 Iowa

**2021 BIG TEN STANDINGS**

WEST DIVISION	BIG TEN PCT.	H	A	DIV	STREAK	OVERALL	PCT.	H	A	N	STREAK
Iowa	3-1 0.750	2-1	1-0	0-1	L1	6-1	0.857	4-1	2-0	0-0	L1
Minnesota	2-1 0.667	1-1	1-0	2-0	W2	4-2	0.667	2-2	2-0	0-0	W2
Purdue	2-1 0.667	1-1	1-0	2-1	W1	4-2	0.667	2-1	2-1	0-0	W1
Wisconsin	1-2 0.333	0-2	1-0	1-0	W1	3-3	0.500	2-2	1-0	0-1	W2
Northwestern	1-2 0.333	1-1	0-1	0-1	W1	3-3	0.500	3-1	0-2	0-0	W1
Illinois	1-3 0.250	1-2	0-1	1-2	L3	2-5	0.286	2-3	0-2	0-0	L1
Nebraska	1-4 0.200	1-1	0-3	1-2	L2	3-5	0.375	3-1	0-4	0-0	L2

EAST DIVISION	BIG TEN PCT.	H	A	DIV	STREAK	OVERALL	PCT.	H	A	N	STREAK
Michigan State	4-0 1.000	1-0	3-0	2-0	W4	7-0	1.000	3-0	4-0	0-0	W7
Ohio State	3-0 1.000	1-0	2-0	2-0	W3	5-1	0.833	3-1	2-0	0-0	W4
Michigan	3-0 1.000	1-0	2-0	1-0	W3	6-0	1.000	4-0	2-0	0-0	W6
Penn State	2-1 0.667	1-0	1-1	1-0	L1	5-1	0.833	4-0	1-1	0-0	L1
Maryland	1-2 0.333	0-1	1-1	0-1	L2	4-2	0.667	3-1	1-1	0-0	L2
Indiana	0-3 0.000	0-1	0-2	0-2	L3	2-4	0.333	1-2	1-2	0-0	L2
Rutgers	0-4 0.000	0-2	0-2	0-3	L4	3-4	0.429	2-2	1-2	0-0	L4



## 2021 ILLINOIS BIG PLAYS

(Rush/Pass/Rec/PR over 20 yds & KOR/Def over 40 yds)

Player	Run	Pass	Rec	Def	ST	Tot
Barker	0	0	1	0	0	1
C. Brown	5	0	2	0	0	7
Epstein	1	0	1	0	0	2
Hart Jr.	0	0	0	1	0	1
Sitkowski	0	7	0	0	0	7
Spann	0	0	3	0	0	3
Williams	0	0	3	0	0	2
Peters	0	4	0	0	0	4
Navarro	0	0	0	0	1	1
McCray	2	0	1	0	0	3
Love III	1	0	0	0	0	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>32</b>

### NEBRASKA (3)

1Q	45	Epstein rush
2Q	41	Hart fumble recovery
3Q	45	Spann reception (from Sitkowski)

### UTSA (4)

2Q	31	Spann reception (from Sitkowski)
2Q	24	Williams reception (from Sitkowski)
4Q	27	Barker reception (from Sitkowski)
4Q	25	Williams reception (from Sitkowski)

### Virginia (3)

2Q	33	Spann reception (from Sitkowski)
3Q	21	Brown rush
4Q	31	Campbell reception (from Sitkowski)

### Maryland (7)

1Q	40	McCray reception (from Peters)
2Q	33	Brown, C. reception (from Peters)
2Q	28	Williams reception (from Peters)
2Q	22	Navarro kick return
3Q	38	McCray rush
3Q	21	Brown, C. reception (from Peters)
4Q	25	Love rush

### Purdue (1)

3Q	38	McCray rush
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### Charlotte (3)

3Q	20	Brown, C. rush
3Q	31	Brown, C. rush
3Q	80	Brown, C. rush

### Wisconsin (1)

2Q	23	Brown, C. rush
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## ILLINOIS SCORING DRIVES

### NEBRASKA

1st	4:07	S	Joseph, Kerby 0 yd punt	6-3 3:42
2nd	2:51	TD	Epstein, Mike 1 yd run (McCourt, James kick)	11-75 6:24
2nd	0:37	TD	Hart, Calvin 41 yd fumble recovery (McCourt, James kick)	3-2 0:21
3rd	6:56	TD	Ford, Luke 2 yd pass from Sitkowski (McCourt, James kick)	14-75 8:04
3rd	4:01	TD	Williams, Isaiah 1 yd pass from Sitkowski (McCourt, James kick)	3-47 1:10

### UTSA

2nd	9:21	TD	Spann, Deuce 31 yd pass from Sitkowski (McCourt, James kick)	5-65 2:10
2nd	2:46	TD	Barker, Daniel 14 yd pass from Sitkowski (McCourt, James kick)	8-75 3:38
3rd	9:22	FG	McCourt, James 52 yd field goal	4-2 1:26
4th	14:15	FG	McCourt, James 53 yd field goal	8-30 4:04
4th	9:56	TD	Barker, Daniel 15 yd pass from Sitkowski (McCourt, James kick)	6-75 2:41
4th	1:55	FG	McCourt, James 32 yd field goal	14-60 2:56

### Virginia

2nd	11:09	TD	Spann, Deuce 33 yd pass from Sitkowski (McCourt, James kick)	8-72, 4:19
3rd	12:59	TD	Brown, Chase 21 yd rush (McCourt, James kick)	4-75, 2:01

### Maryland

2nd	1:27	FG	McCourt, James 25 yd field goal	10-73, 2:16
3rd	6:15	TD	McCray, Josh 38 yd rush (McCourt, James kick)	8-93, 3:37
4th	14:13	TD	Washington, Casey 30 yd rush (McCourt, James kick)	3-46, 1:05

### Purdue

2nd	2:24	FG	McCourt, James 51 yd field goal	7-29, 3:40
3rd	8:18	FG	McCourt, James 35 yd field goal	13-58, 6:40
4th	14:51	FG	McCourt, James 45 yd field goal	6-53, 1:39

### Charlotte

1st	7:28	FG	McCourt, James 29 yd field goal	17-64, 7:32
2nd	8:18	TD	Barker, Daniel 10 yd pass from Peters (McCourt kick)	12-65, 5:40
3rd	14:51	TD	Brown, Chase 31 yd rush (McCourt kick)	10-94, 4:52
3rd	0:00	TD	Brown, Chase 80 yd rush (McCourt kick)	1-80, 0:12

### Wisconsin

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**TEAM GAME-BY-GAME STATISTICS**

Team	Score	First Downs	Rushing Att-Yd-TD	Passing C-A-Int-TD	Passing Yards	Total Offense	Punt	Fumbles	Penalties	Time Poss
Illinois	30	18	48-167-1	15-19-0-2	159	326	6-272	1-1	3-40	34:55
vs. Nebraska	22	19	39-160-2	16-32-0-1	232	392	5-172	2-1	5-67	25:05
Illinois	30	24	35-146-0	22-43-0-3	266	412	5-245	3-1	7-61	29:18
vs. UTSA	37	26	50-217-3	20-32-0-1	280	497	5-221	1-1	3-43	30:42
Illinois	14	20	27-116-1	24-45-1-1	221	337	7-300	1-0	8-90	27:52
at Virginia	42	31	533-133-1	28-40-1-5	423	556	3-140	1-0	9-74	31:19
Illinois	17	19	45-150-2	10-26-1-0	185	335	7-302	1-0	6-44	30:51
vs. Maryland	20	24	27-131-1	32-43-0-1	350	481	6-283	3-2	8-63	29:09
Illinois	9	17	42-175-0	14-27-0-0	100	275	6-291	1-0	1-10	33:45
at Purdue	13	17	26-38-0	24-40-2-1	277	315	5-229	2-0	1-15	26:15
Illinois	24	22	50-336-2	10-19-0-0	78	414	1-39	1-0	7-85	34:03
vs. Charlotte	14	17	27-72-0	17-23-1-2	191	263	3-117	2-0	5-47	25:57
Illinois	24	22	50-336-2	10-19-0-0	78	414	1-39	1-0	7-85	34:03
vs. Wisconsin	14	17	27-72-0	17-23-1-2	191	263	3-117	2-0	5-47	25:57

**GAME-BY-GAME STARTERS**
**OFFENSIVE STARTERS**

GAME	T	G	C	G	T	QB	RB	WR	WR	TE	TE/FB
Nebraska	Lowe	Jeresaty	Kramer	Pihlstrom	Palczewski	Peters	Epstein	Williams	Navarro	Ford	Barker
UTSA	Lowe	Jeresaty	Kramer	Pihlstrom	Palczewski	Sitkowski	Norwood	Washington	Navarro	Ford	Barker
Virginia	Lowe	Badovinac	Kramer	Pearl	Palczewski	Sitkowski	Brown	Williams	Campbell	Ford	Barker
Maryland	Lowe	Badovinac	Jeresaty	Pearl	Palczewski	Peters	Brown	Washington	Sandy	Ford	Barker
Purdue	Lowe	Jeresaty	Kramer	Pearl	Palczewski	Peters	McCray	Bryant	Sandy	Ford	Badovinac
Charlotte	Lowe	Pihlstrom	Kramer	Pearl	Palczewski	Peters	Brown	Bryant	Sandy	Ford	Reiman
Wisconsin	Lowe	Pihlstrom	Kramer	Pearl	Palczewski	Peters	Brown	Williams	Washington	Ford	Reiman
<i>Consecutive</i>	<i>41</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Career</i>	<i>47</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>43</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>47</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>2</i>

**DEFENSIVE STARTERS**

GAME	OLB	DT	DT	OLB	LB	LB	CB	CB	S/LB	S	S
Nebraska	Carney Jr.	Newton	Randolph	Gay	Hansen	Hart Jr.	Adams	Witherspoon	Martin	S. Brown	Joseph
UTSA	Carney Jr.	Newton	Perry	Gay	Hansen	Barnes, T	Adams	Witherspoon	Tolson	S. Brown	D. Smith
Virginia	Carney Jr.	Woods	Perry	Gay	Hansen	Barnes, T	Adams	Witherspoon	Martin	S. Brown	D. Smith
Maryland	Carney Jr.	Newton	Perry	Coleman	Hansen	Barnes, T	Nicholson	Witherspoon	Martin	S. Brown	Joseph
Purdue	Carney Jr.	Newton	Perry	Coleman	McEachern	Tolson	Adams	K. Smith	Martin	S. Brown	Joseph
Charlotte	Carney Jr.	Newton	Randolph	Coleman	Barnes, T.	Tolson	Adams	Nicholson	Martin	S. Brown	Joseph
Wisconsin	Carney Jr.	Newton	Perry	Gay	Hansen	Barnes, T.	Adams	Witherspoon	Tolson	S. Brown	Joseph
<i>Consecutive</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Career</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>33</i>	<i>7</i>



# 2021 STARTERS BY POSITION

## OFFENSE

Pos.	#	Player	Starts
QB	18	Brandon Peters	5
	9	Artur Sitkowski	2
RB	2	Chase Brown	4
	26	Mike Epstein	1
	3	Jakari Norwood	1
	0	Josh McCray	1
WR	11	Carlos Sandy	3
	14	Casey Washington	3
	1	Isaiah Williams	3
	13	Pat Bryant	2
	86	Donny Navarro	2
	19	Dalevon Campbell	1
TE	82	Luke Ford	6
	87	Daniel Barker	4
	89	Tip Reiman	2
OL	79	Vederian Lowe	7
	63	Alex Palczewski	7
	65	Doug Kramer	6
	54	Julian Pearl	6
	55	Blake Jeresaty	4
	75	Alex Pihlstrom	4
	72	Jack Badovinac	3

## DEFENSE

Pos.	#	Player	Starts	
OLB	99	Owen Carney	7	
	92	Isaiah Gay	4	
	49	Seth Coleman	3	
DT	94	Jer'Zhan Newton	6	
	96	Roderick Perry	5	
	88	Keith Randolph	2	
	91	Jamal Woods	1	
	44	Tarique Barnes	5	
LB	35	Jake Hansen	5	
	45	Khalan Tolson	4	
	5	Calvin Hart	1	
46	Alec McEachern	1		
	CB	6	Tony Adams	6
		31	Devin Witherspoon	5
10		Tahveon Nicholson	2	
7		Kendall Smith	1	
30		Sydney Brown	7	
S	21	Jartavius Martin	5	
	25	Kerby Joseph	5	
	4	Derrick Smith	2	

## SPECIAL TEAMS

Pos.	#	Player	Starts
K	17	James McCourt	7
P	14	Blake Hayes	7
LS	56	Ethan Tabel	7

### PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

Lucas Althaus	all-THAUSE
Jafar Armstrong	juh-FAR
Jack Badovinac	buh-DOH-VI-nack
Tarique Barnes	ta-REEK
Marquez Beason	mar-KEZ
Christian Bobak	bo-BACK
Matt Bobak	bo-BACK
Verdis Brown	VUR-diss
Dalevon Campbell	DALE-von
Mike Cerniglia Jr.	Sher-nell-lee-uh
Sean Coghlan	COG-lan
Samari Collier	Suh-MAR-ee
Shammond Cooper	SHUH-mond
Tommy Cronin	CROW-nin
Kionte Curry	KEE-on-tay
Preston Engel	EN-gull
Mike Epstein	ep-STEEN
Nick Fedanzo	fa-DON-zo
Josh Gesky	guess-KEE
Ezekiel Holmes	Eh-ZEE-kee-ul
Prather Hudson	PRAY-thur
Blake Jeresaty	jair-uh-sot-ee
Josh Kreutz	krew-tz
Tailon Leitzsey	TAY-lon LIT-see
Ty Lindenman	Lind-uh-man
Vederian Lowe	vuh-DARE-ee-an
Michael Marchese	mar-CASE
Jartavius Martin	jar-TAY-vee-us
Alec McEachern	Mc-CARE-un
Tahveon Nicholson	tah-VEE-ohn
Jakari Norwood	juh-CAR-ee
Kenenna Odeluga	Kuh-nen-uh Oh-duh-loo-guh
Moses Okpala	oak-PAH-la
Alex Palczewski	pal-CHESS-key
Alex Pihlstrom	PILL-strum
Josh Plohr	plor
Marko Rajkovic	RAY-koh-vitch
Dylan Rosiek	ROH-see-ek
Artur Sitkowski	Sit-kow-skee
Deuce Spann	span
Ethan Tabel	tuh-BELL
Coran Taylor	kor-AHN
Khmari Thompson	Kuh-MAR-ee
Khalan Tolson	KAY-lahn
Peyton Vining	VINE-ing
Joriell Washington	jur-EE-el
Devon Witherspoon	DEV-in

## THE LAST TIME (TEAM)

	Illinois	Opponent
80 points:	87 vs. Illinois Wesleyan (87-3), 10/5/1912	--
70 points:	79 vs. Illinois State (79-6), 9/16/1944	70, Michigan (70-21), 11/7/1981
60 points:	65 at Michigan (65-67), 11/6/2010	63, Maryland (63-33), 10/27/2018
50 points:	55 vs. Minnesota (55-31), 11/3/2018	56, at Penn State (21-56), 12/19/2020
40 points:	41 at Nebraska, 11/21/2020	42, at Virginia (14-42), 9/11/2021
0 points in 2nd half:	at Penn State (21-56), 12/19/2020	Charlotte, 10/2/2021
Allowed 0 points:	Western Illinois (44-0), 9/12/2015	Wisconsin (24-0), 10/9/2021
Did not score a touchdown:	at Purdue (9-13), 09/25/2021	Akron, (3-42) 8/31/2019
400 rushing yards:	430 vs. Minnesota, 11/3/2018	411, at Northwestern, 12/12/2020
300 rushing yards:	336 vs. Charlotte, 10/2/2021	411, at Northwestern, 12/12/2020
200 rushing yards:	285 at Nebraska, 11/21/2020	253, at Penn State, 12/19/2020
Three 70+ yard runs:	3 (72, 72, 77) vs. Minnesota, 11/3/2018	
Fewer than 100 rushing yards:	26 vs. Wisconsin 10/9/2021	83, Purdue, 10/31/2020
Fewer than 50 yards rushing:	26 vs. Wisconsin 10/9/2021	38, Purude 09/25/2021
Fewer than 20 yards rushing:	14 vs. Northwestern 11/30/2019	10, UConn, 9/7/2019
Negative yards net rushing:	-27 vs. Arizona, 9/18/1993	-10, Murray State, 9/3/2016
One first down:		Missouri, 9/10/1994
Zero first downs:		Michigan, 10/27/1934
400 passing yards:	450 vs. Purdue, 10/4/2014	423, at Virginia, 9/11/2021
300 passing yards:	369 at Michigan State, 11/9/2019	327, at Penn State, 12/19/2020
Fewer than 100 passing yards:	67 vs. Wisconsin 10/9/2021	82, at Northwestern 12/12/2020
4 TD catches by tight ends:	4 vs. Miami (Ohio), 9/28/2013	
700 total net yards:	723 vs. Illinois-Normal, 9/16/1944	712, Maryland, 10/27/2018
600 total net yards:	646 vs. Minnesota, 11/3/2018	674, vs. Nebraska, 9/21/2019
500 total net yards:	509 at Nebraska, 11/10/2018	556, at Virginia, 9/11/2021
400 total net yards:	414 vs. Charlotte, 10/2/2021	491, Wisconsin 10/9/2021
Fewer than 250 total net yards:		192, Akron, 8/31/2019
Fewer than 100 total net yards:	93 vs. Wisconsin 10/	96, South Dakota State, 9/10/2011
9+ sacks in a game:	9 at Purdue, 11/3/2001	
6+ sacks in a game:	6 vs. Akron, 8/31/2019	6, Maryland 9/17/2021
No sacks allowed:	vs. Charlotte, 10/2/2021	
Back-to-back games with no sacks allowed:	vs. Michigan State, 11/5/2016 and at Wisconsin, 11/12/2016	
15+ TFL in a game:	15 vs. San Jose St., 9/21/2002	
10+ TFL in a game:	10 vs. Rutgers, 11/2/2019	
10+ passes broken up:	11 vs. Illinois State, 9/12/2009	
Forced 5+ turnovers:	5 at Nebraska, 11/21/2020	
Turned ball over 5+ times:	6 vs. Louisiana Tech, 9/22/2012	
No turnovers:	at Purdue, 09/25/2021	
Back-to-back games with no turnovers:	at Nebraska, 11/21/2020 and vs. Iowa, 12/5/2020	
Successful two-point conversion:	vs. Michigan, 10/12/2019	Nebraska, 9/21/2019
Two successful two-point conversions:	at Ohio State (2), 11/3/2012	Northwestern (2), 11/29/2014
Five field goals:	5 vs. Wisconsin, 10/20/2001	
Missed extra point kick:	at Michigan State, 11/9/2019	Minnesota, 11/7/2020
Blocked two kicks:	2 at South Florida, 9/15/2017	
Blocked two punts:	2 vs. Indiana, 10/23/2010	
Entire game without punting:	vs. Miami (Ohio), 9/28/2013	
No penalties:	vs. Wisconsin 10/9/2021	
A successful on-side kick:	vs. Penn State, 11/22/2014	
Overtime game:	Loss vs. Purdue, 34-31 (OT), 10/8/2016	
Overtime game at home:	Loss vs. Purdue, 34-31 (OT), 10/8/2016	
A game with a weather delay:	at South Florida, 9/15/2017 (0:37 delay)	
A game was postponed:	vs. Kent State, 9/4/2015 (2:50 delay)	
	Eventually postponed and played next day on 9/5/2015	



## THE LAST TIME (INDIVIDUAL)

	Illinois	Opponent
<b>Rushing</b>		
<b>300 yards rushing:</b>	330, Mikel Leshoure vs. Northwestern, 11/20/2010	
<b>250 yards rushing:</b>	257, Chase Brown vs. Charlotte, 10/2/2021	256, Jordan Canzeri, Iowa, 10/10/2015
<b>200 yards rushing:</b>	213, Reggie Corbin vs. Minnesota, 11/3/2018	224, Mohamed Ibrahim, Minnesota, 11/7/2020
<b>150 yards rushing:</b>	156, Josh McCray at Purdue 09/25/2021	224, Mohamed Ibrahim, Minnesota, 11/7/2020
<b>Back-to-back 175-yard rushing games:</b>	Rashard Mendenhall (189 vs. Ball State, 10/27/2007 & 201 at Minnesota, 11/3/2007)	
<b>Three consecutive 100-yard rushing games:</b>	Reggie Corbin, 10/20/2018-11/3/2018 (3 games)	
<b>Five consecutive 100-yard rushing games:</b>	Mikel Leshoure, 11/6/2010-12/29/2010 (5 games)	
<b>Two rushers with 175 yards:</b>	Harvey (215), Havard (175) vs. Middle Tennessee, 9/12/1998	
<b>Two rushers with 100 yards:</b>	Epstein (113) and C. Brown. (110) at Nebraska, 11/21/2020	Mellusi (145), Allen (131), Wisconsin 10/9/2021
<b>80+ yard rushing play:</b>	80, Chase Brown vs. Charlotte, 10/2/2021	
<b>75+ yard rushing play:</b>	77, Reggie Corbin vs. Minnesota, 11/3/2018 (3rd quarter)	79, Justin Jackson, vs. Northwestern, 11/25/17
<b>Two 40+ runs in one quarter:</b>	56 and 56 (2nd), Kendrick Foster vs. Murray State, 9/3/2016	Carlos Hyde (51, 55 in 4th), Ohio State, 11/16/2013
<b>True-freshman rushed for 100 yards:</b>	Josh McCray, 156 at Purdue, 09/25/2021	
<b>True-freshman rushed for 100 yards in first career game:</b>	E.B. Halsey, 139 vs. Missouri, 8/30/2003	
<b>40 rushing attempts:</b>	40, Antoineo Harris at Wisconsin, 11/9/2002	
<b>30 rushing attempts:</b>	31, Williams at Rutgers, 11/14/2020	
<b>Two rushers with 2 TDs:</b>	Corbin (2) & Bush, Jr. (2) vs. Minnesota, 11/3/2018	
<b>8 TDs rushing:</b>	Howard Griffith (8) vs. Southern Illinois, 9/22/1990	
<b>4 TDs rushing:</b>	Antoineo Harris (4) vs. Indiana, 10/27/2002	
<b>3 TDs rushing:</b>	A.J. Bush, Jr. (3) at Nebraska, 11/10/2018	
<b>2+ TDs rushing by a QB:</b>	A.J. Bush, Jr. (3) at Nebraska, 11/10/2018	
<b>Receiving</b>		
<b>200 yards receiving:</b>	200, Mike Dudek vs. Purdue, 10/4/2014	246, Roy Roundtree, Michigan, 11/6/2010
<b>150 yards receiving:</b>	178, Josh Imatorbhebhe at Michigan State, 11/9/2019	155, Zakhari Franklin, UTSA, 9/4/2021
<b>100 yards receiving:</b>	101, Isaiah Williams vs. UTSA, 9/4/2021	133, Jelani Woods, Virginia, 9/11/2021
<b>Two 100-yard receivers:</b>	Turner (164) and Hardee (125) at Northwestern, 11/26/2016	David Bell (122), Milton Wright (100), Purdue, 10/31/2020
<b>Running back with 100+ yards receiving:</b>	100, Josh Ferguson vs. Northwestern, 10/27/2015	
<b>70+ yard pass play:</b>	83, Josh Imatorbhebhe from Brandon Peters at Michigan State, 11/9/2019	75, Penn State (Sean Clifford to Jahan Dotson), 12/19/2020
<b>60+ yard pass play:</b>	83, Josh Imatorbhebhe from Brandon Peters at Michigan State, 11/9/2019	
<b>50+ yard pass play:</b>	52, Josh Imatorbhebhe from Coran Taylor vs Minnesota, 11/7/2020	75, Penn State (Sean Clifford to Jahan Dotson), 12/19/2020
<b>10+ receptions:</b>	11, Malik Turner at Northwestern, 11/26/2016	10, Zakhari Franklin, UTSA, 9/4/2021
<b>Two receivers with 2 TDs:</b>	Will Judson and Chris Duvall vs. Missouri, 8/30/2008	
<b>Three receiving TDs:</b>	A.J. Jenkins (3) vs. Northwestern, 10/1/2011	
<b>Offensive lineman caught a pass:</b>	Jeff Allen, (1 rec., 2 yds) vs. Southern Illinois, 9/11/2010	
<b>Offensive lineman scored a TD:</b>	Corey Lewis, fumble recovery in end zone at Indiana, 11/9/2013	
<b>Passing</b>		
<b>600 yards passing:</b>	621, Dave Wilson at Ohio State, 11/8/1980	
<b>500 yards passing:</b>	621, Dave Wilson at Ohio State, 11/8/1980	
<b>400 yards passing:</b>	456, Wes Lunt vs. Western Kentucky, 9/6/2014	405, Brennan Armstrong, at Virginia, 9/11/2021
<b>300 yards passing:</b>	369, Brandon Peters. at Michigan State, 11/9/2019	350, Taulia Tagovailoa vs. Maryland, 9/17/2021
<b>Consecutive 300-yard passing games:</b>	N. Scheelhaase at Penn State (321, 11/2/2013) and at Indiana (450, 11/9/2013)	
<b>Three consecutive 300-yard passing games:</b>	Jason Verduzco vs East Carolina (352, 8/31/1991), at Missouri (431, 9/14/1991) and vs. Houston (341, 9/21/1991)	
<b>6 TDs passing:</b>	Dave Wilson at Ohio State, 11/8/1980	
<b>5 TDs passing:</b>	Nathan Scheelhaase (5) vs. Miami (Ohio), 9/28/2013	Brennan Armstrong (5) at Virginia, 9/11/2021
<b>4 TDs passing:</b>	Brandon Peters (4) at UConn, 9/7/2019	
<b>3 TDs passing:</b>	Sitkowski, Artur (3) vs UTSA, 11/4/2021	
<b>Two 65-plus yard TD passes in the same game:</b>	N. Scheelhaase, 77 & 67 yds to A.J. Jenkins at Indiana, 10/8/11	
<b>10+ consecutive completions in a game:</b>	Brandon Peters (10) at UConn, 9/7/2019	
<b>Non-QB with passing TD:</b>	Trenard Davis (WR) vs. Penn State, 9/21/2018	

## THE LAST TIME (INDIVIDUAL)

	Illinois	Opponent
<b>Defense</b>		
<b>20 Tackles:</b>	J Leman (20) vs. Missouri, 9/1/2007	
<b>19 Tackles:</b>	Clayton Fejedelem (19) vs. Wisconsin, 10/24/2015	
<b>4 interceptions:</b>	Mike Gow (4) vs. Stanford, 9/21/1974	
<b>3 interceptions:</b>	Eugene Wilson (3) vs. Penn State, 11/10/2001	
<b>2 interceptions:</b>	Sydney Brown (2) vs. Michigan State, 11/9/2019	
<b>3+ sacks in a game:</b>	Owen Carney, Jr. (3.0) vs. Purdue, 10/31/2020	
<b>5+ TFLs in a game:</b>	Jake Hansen (6.0) vs. Kent State, 9/1/2018	
<b>4+ TFLs in a game:</b>	Jamal Milan (4.0) at Purdue, 10/26/2019	
<b>4+ PBUs in a game:</b>	Devon Witherspoon (4) vs. Nebraska, 8/28/2021	
<b>3+ PBUs in a game:</b>	Devon Witherspoon (4) vs. Nebraska, 8/28/2021	Herbig (3), Wisconsin, 10/9/2021
<b>3+ PBUs in back-to-back games:</b>	Jaylen Dunlap vs. Minnesota (3) and Michigan State (4), 10/29/16-11/5/16	
<b>Interception by a lineman:</b>	Keith Randolph, vs. Charlotte 10/3/2021	
<b>Interception return for TD:</b>	Sydney Brown (76 yards) at Michigan State, 11/9/2019	Tyler Coyle (52 yards), at UConn, 9/7/2019
<b>Two players with interception returns for TD in a game:</b>	Pat Nixon-Youman (68 yards), Jonathan Brown (66 yards) vs. Indiana, 10/23/2010	
<b>Fumble recovery for TD:</b>	CJ Hart (41 yards) vs. UTSA, 9/4/2021	Grant Marvin (4 yards), Purdue, 10/31/2020
<b>Safety:</b>	Kerby Joseph special teams tackle vs. Nebraska 8/28/2021	Team (tackle in end zone), Minnesota, 10/29/2016
<b>Defensive extra point:</b>	Nate Hobbs (75 yards) at USF, 9/15/2017	
<b>Total Offense/All-Purpose</b>		
<b>500 yards total offense:</b>	503, Juice Williams vs. Minnesota, 10/11/2008	
<b>400 yards total offense:</b>	439, Wes Lunt vs. Western Kentucky, 9/6/2014	
<b>300 yards passing and 100 yards rushing:</b>	431 (310-121), Juice Williams at Michigan, 10/4/2008	
<b>300 all-purpose yards:</b>	328, A.J. Jenkins vs. Northwestern, 10/1/2011	
<b>200 all-purpose yards:</b>	213, Reggie Corbin vs. Minnesota, 11/3/2018	
<b>4 total TDs:</b>	Brandon Peters (4 pass) at UConn, 9/7/2019	
<b>2 TDs in 1 minute:</b>	Ke'Shawn Vaughn at Purdue (3rd quarter), 11/7/2015	
<b>Special Teams</b>		
<b>5 field goals:</b>	Doug Higgins vs. Michigan State, 10/20/1990	
<b>4 field goals:</b>	Chase McLaughlin (4) at Maryland 10/27/2018	Keith Duncan, Iowa 11/23/2019
<b>3 field goals:</b>	James McCourt (3) at Purdue 9/25/2021	
<b>Made 50+ yard field goal:</b>	James McCourt (52) vs. UTSA, 9/4/2021	
<b>Three 50+ yard field goals:</b>	--	Tim Douglas (51, 58, 51), Iowa, 9/26/1998
<b>Blocked a punt:</b>	Dawson DeGroot vs. Western Illinois, 9/8/2018	
<b>Blocked punt for a touchdown:</b>	Dawson DeGroot (block), Stanley Green (TD) vs. Western Illinois, 9/8/2018	A.J. Epenesa (19 yards), Iowa, 11/17/2018
<b>Blocked two field goals:</b>	Terrell Washington vs. NIU, 9/8/2001	
<b>Blocked two PATs:</b>	Rob Bain at Penn State, 10/31/2015	
<b>Blocked a field goal:</b>	Isaiah Gay at USF, 9/15/2017	
<b>Blocked a PAT:</b>	Calvin Avery vs. Nebraska, 9/21/2019	
<b>Punt return for TD:</b>	V'Angelo Bentley (67 yards) vs. Ohio State, 11/16/2013	K. Groenewed (61 yards), Iowa, 11/17/2018
<b>Kickoff return for TD:</b>	V'Angelo Bentley (100 yards) vs. Southern Illinois, 8/31/2013	L. Wade (100 yards), Penn State, 12/19/2020
<b>Blocked FG returned for TD:</b>	Travis Williams (66 yards) vs. Illinois State, 9/6/2003	
<b>Two-point conversion:</b>	Dre Brown run vs. Michigan, 10/12/2019	
<b>Two two-point conversions in the same game:</b>	2 at Ohio State, 11/3/2012 (Russell pass to LaCosse; Russell rush)	



# GAME SUMMARIES

## GAME 1

**NEBRASKA** ..... **22**  
**ILLINOIS** ..... **30**

**AUG. 28, 2021**

**MEMORIAL STADIUM // CHAMPAIGN, ILL. // 41,064**

### SCORING BY QUARTER

Team	1	2	3	4	F
Nebraska	0	9	7	6	22
Illinois	2	14	14	0	30

### SCORING SUMMARY

#### First Quarter

ILL: Joseph safety, 4:07 (6-3-3,42)

#### Second Quarter

NEB: Stepp 2 yd rush (Culp kick missed), 14:25 (7-63, 02:27)

NEB: Culp 27 yd FG 9:15 (8-60, 03:01)

ILL: Epstein 1 yd rush (McCourt kick), 2:51 (11-75, 06:24)

ILL: Hart Jr. 41 yd fumble return (#17 J.McCourt kick), 0:37 (00:21)

#### Third Quarter

ILL: Ford 2 yd pass from Sitkowski (McCourt kick), 6:56 (14-75, 08:04)

ILL: Williams 1 yd pass from Sitkowski (McCourt kick), 4:01 (3-47, 01:10)

NEB: Martinez 75 yd rush (Culp kick), 3:48 (1-75, 00:13)

#### Fourth Quarter

NEB: Martin 4 yd pass from Martinez (Culp kick missed), 2:41 (19-91, 06:42)

### TEAM STATISTICS

Category	ILLINOIS	NEBRASKA
First Downs	18	19
Rushes-Yards	48-167	39-160
Passing Yards	159	232
Comp-Att-Int	15-19-0	16-32-0
Total Yards	326	392
Punts-Avg	6-45.3	5-34.4
Kickoff Returns	6-372	5-331
Penalties-Yards	3-40	5-67
Fumbles-Lost	1-1	2-1
Sacks By	5-35	3-17
Third-down Conv.	6-13	5-14
Time of Possession	34:55	25:05

### INDIVIDUAL LEADERS

**RUSHING (Carries-Yards-TD):** ILL - Epstein 16-75-1, Love 12-45-0.

NEB - Martinez 17-111-1, Ervin 12-33

**PASSING (Comp-Att-INT-TD-Yds):** ILL - Sitkowski 12-15-0-2-124.

NEB - Martinez 16-32-0-1-232.

**RECEIVING (Rec-Yards-TD):** ILL - Williams 6-41-1, Ford 3-30-1, Washington

2-12-0. NEB - Martin 6-103-1, Toure 3-37-0, Manning 2-26-0

**TACKLE LEADERS (Tackles, TFL-Yds):** ILL - Adams 11, 0.0-0; Brown 9, 0.0-0; Hart 6, 1.5-8. NEB - Henrich 11, 0.5-1; Reimer 8, 0.5-0; Nelson 6, 2.5-9.

### GAME NOTES

- Nebraska's 22 points were the fewest allowed by the Illini defense at Memorial Stadium since defeating Rutgers 38-10 on Nov. 2, 2019.
- Illinois reeled off 28 points in a span of just 13:50, scoring four TDs that turned a 9-2 deficit with less than three minutes left in the first half into a 30-9 lead with just over four minutes remaining in the third quarter.
- Illinois beat Nebraska for the second-straight season, improving to 5-13-1 all-time against the Huskers, including a 3-4-1 record in Champaign.
- This was Illinois' first victory over Nebraska at home since 2015.
- Illinois has now defeated Nebraska in consecutive seasons for the first time since 1923 (W, 24-7 in Champaign) and 1924 (W, 9-6 in Lincoln).
- Illinois posted a conference win in a season opener for the first time since Sept. 1, 1984 (24-16 victory over Northwestern in Champaign).
- Illinois played a season opener at Memorial Stadium against a conference opponent for the first time since Sept. 2, 1995, when No. 25 Illinois hosted No. 13 Michigan.
- Aug. 28 marked the earliest season opener in Illinois' 132-year program history. The previous earliest start date was Aug. 30 (2003, 2008, 2014). This is the ninth time in program history that the season has started in August.
- Illinois played Nebraska in a season opener for the fifth time in program history (1923, 1924, 1925, 1953). The Illini now have a record of 3-1-1 against Nebraska in season openers.
- Illinois captains: DB Tony Adams, OLB Owen Carney Jr., LB Jake Hansen, P Blake Hayes, OL Doug Kramer, OL Vederian Lowe
- Illinois welcomed back fans at Memorial Stadium for the first time since the conclusion of the 2019 season. Today's attendance was 41,064.

## GAME 2

**UTSA** ..... **37**  
**ILLINOIS** ..... **30**

**SEPT. 4, 2021**

**MEMORIAL STADIUM // CHAMPAIGN, ILL. // 33,906**

### SCORING BY QUARTER

Team	1	2	3	4	F
UTSA	7	13	3	14	37
Illinois	0	14	3	13	30

### SCORING SUMMARY

#### First Quarter

UTSA: Frank 9 yd rush (Duplessis kick), 1:32 (13-94 4:40)

#### Second Quarter

UTSA: Brady 7 yd rush (Duplessis kick), 11:31 (9-61, 03:43)

ILL: Spann 31 yd reception from Sitkowski, 9:21 (5-65 2:10)

UTSA: Duplessis 32 yd field goal, 6:24 (9-60, 2:57)

ILL: Barker 14 yd pass from Sitkowski (McCourt kick), 2:46 (8-75 3:38)

UTSA: Duplessis/Hunte 28 yd field goal, 0:47 (5-15 1:01)

#### Third Quarter

ILL: McCourt 53 yd field goal, 9:22 (4-2, 1:26)

UTSA: Duplessis 27 yd field goal, 3:19 (10-75, 3:39)

#### Fourth Quarter

ILL: McCourt 52 yd field goal, 14:15 (8-30,4:04)

UTSA: Franklin 19 yd pass from Harris (Duplessis kick), 12:37 (5-75,1:38)

ILL: Barker 15 yd pass from Sitkowski (McCourt kick), 9:56 (6-75,2:41)

UTSA: Brady 33 yd run (Duplessis kick), 4:57 (10-75,4:59)

ILL: McCourt 32 ys field goal, 1:55 (14-60,2:56)

### TEAM STATISTICS

Category	ILLINOIS	UTSA
First Downs	24	26
Rushes-Yards	35-146	50-217
Passing Yards	266	280
Comp-Att-Int	22-43-0	20-32-0
Total Yards	412	497
Punts-Avg	5-49.0	5-44.2
Kickoff Returns	7-455	8-498
Penalties-Yards	7-61	3-43
Fumbles-Lost	3-1	1-1
Sacks By	1-0	0-0
Third-down Conv.	8-18	9-17
Time of Possession	29:18	30:42

### INDIVIDUAL LEADERS

**RUSHING (Carries-Yards-TD):** ILL - Love III 11-39-0, Sitkowski 6-38-0

UTSA - McCormick 31-127-0, Brady 11-67-2

**PASSING (Comp-Att-INT-TD-Yds):** ILL - Sitkowski 22-42-0-3-266

UTSA - Harris 20-32-0-1-280

**RECEIVING (Rec-Yards-TD):** ILL - Williams 8-101-0, Barker 5-74-2, Spann 1-31-

1. UTSA - Franklin 10-155-1, Cephus 6-73-0

**TACKLE LEADERS (Tackles, TFL-Yds):** ILL - Adams 11, 0.0-0; Brown 9, 0.0-0; Hart 6, 1.5-8. UTSA - Woolen 6,1.0-1 Harmanson 7, 0.0-0 Taylor 5,0.0-0

### GAME NOTES

- Illinois scored 30 points in the loss to UTSA, the team's second consecutive 30-point offensive effort to start the season. Illinois last scored 30 points in back-to-back games on Nov. 2, 2019 vs. Rutgers (W, 38-10) and Nov. 9, 2019 at Michigan State (W, 37-34).
- The Illinois offensive line did not surrender a sack in Saturday's game, last accomplishing the feat Dec. 12, 2020 at Northwestern.
- Sophomore QB Artur Sitkowski through for a career-best three touchdowns in Saturday's game. Sitkowski also tallied 266 yards, completing 22 of 42 attempts, the second-most attempts of his collegiate career.
- Redshirt freshman WR Isaiah Williams led the Illini with eight catches for 101 yards. Williams is the first Illinois player with 100+ receiving yards in a game since Josh Imatorbhebe had 178 yards on Nov. 9, 2019 at Michigan State.
- Junior TE Daniel Barker recorded five catches for 74 yards with two touchdown receptions. Barker's two touchdowns marked a career-high. He is only the third Illinois TE to have two receiving touchdowns in a single game in the last 25 years
- Senior K James McCourt hit two field goals from 50+ yards on Saturday, giving him six for his Illini career and moving him past former teammate Chase McLaughlin (2014-18) for the Illini career record.
- McCourt became the first Illini to hit two FGs from 50+ yards in a single game. McCourt also tied his career-high with three total FGs (at Rutgers, Nov. 14, 2020) and set a new career-high with 12 points scored.

## GAME 3

**ILLINOIS** ..... **14**  
**VIRGINIA** ..... **42**

**SEPT. 11, 2021**

**SCOTT STADIUM // CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA. // 36,036**

### SCORING BY QUARTER

Team	1	2	3	4	F
Illinois	0	7	7	0	14
Virginia	14	7	14	7	42

### SCORING SUMMARY

#### First Quarter

UVA: Woods 32 yd pass from Armstrong (Duenkel kick),13:44 (4-75, 01:16)

UVA: Wicks 28 yd pass from Armstrong (Duenkel kick), 10:04 (4-80, 01:37)

#### Second Quarter

ILL: Spann 33 yd pass from Sitkowski (McCourt kick), 11:09 (8-72, 04:19)

UVA: Wicks 6 yd pass from Armstrong (Duenkel kick), 01:17 (7-62, 02:41)

#### Third Quarter

ILL: Brown 21 yd run (McCourt kick), 12:59 (4-75, 02:01)

UVA: Kemp 2 yd pass from Armstrong (Duenkel kick), 09:04 (9-75 yards, 03:55)

UVA: Thompson,Keytaon 8 yd run (Duenkel,Justin kick), 04:06 (9-74, 03:50)

#### Fourth Quarter

UVA: Taulapapa 3 yd pass from Armstrong (Duenkel kick), 06:02 (5-46, 02:44)

### TEAM STATISTICS

Category	ILLINOIS	VIRGINIA
First Downs	20	31
Rushes-Yards	27-116	33-133
Passing Yards	221	423
Comp-Att-Int	24-45-1	28-40-1
Total Yards	337	556
Punts-Avg	7-42.9	3-46.7
Kickoff Returns	0	0
Penalties-Yards	8-90	8-74
Fumbles-Lost	1-1	2-1
Sacks By	0-0	3
Third-down Conv.	6-17	4-10
Time of Possession	27:52	31:19

### INDIVIDUAL LEADERS

**RUSHING (Carries-Yards-TD):** ILL - Brown7-41-1, Norwood 4-35-0

UVA - Taulapapa 10-35-0, Armstrong 5-31-0

**PASSING (Comp-Att-INT-TD-Yds):** ILL - Sitkowski 24-45-1-1-221

UVA - Armstrong 27-36-1-5-405

**RECEIVING (Rec-Yards-TD):** ILL - Williams 4-41-0, Campbell 2-42-0, Spann

1-33-1. UVA - Woods 5-122-1, Wicks 3-69-2

**TACKLE LEADERS (Tackles, TFL-Yds):** ILL - Martin 7, 0.5-3; Witherspoon 7, 1.0-1;

Hansen 6, 0.5-3. UVA - Taylor 7,2.0-14 Jackson 7, 0.0-0 Clary 7,0.5/1

### GAME NOTES

- The Fighting Illini fall to 1-2, and 0-1 on the road, to open the 2021 season.
- Saturday's loss moves the Illini to 2-1 all-time against Virginia. The Illini had previously beaten the Cavaliers in two bowl matchups at the 1999 MicronPC.com Bowl and the 1990 Citrus Bowl.
- Today's game at Virginia kicked off at 11:01 a.m. ET/10:01 a.m. CT, marking the earliest kickoff time in program history.
- The Illinois defense gave up 405 yards passing to Virginia QB Brennan Armstrong (27-36, 5 TDs). It marks the first 400-yard passer against the Illini defense in almost 19 years, dating back to Sept. 21, 2002 when San Jose State's Scott Rislov recorded 408 passing yards.
- Illinois captains: DB Tony Adams, OLB Owen Carney Jr., LB Jake Hansen, P Blake Hayes, OL Doug Kramer, OL Vederian Lowe.
- Senior OL duo of Vederian Lowe and Alex Palczewski each made their 43rd career starts (37th consecutive for Lowe) on Saturday. They are now tied for 17th on the Illini career starts list, five starts away from tying the Illinois record of 48.
- Senior LB Jake Hansen forced two fumbles on Saturday, giving him 12 for his Illini career. He moves past Whitney Mercilus (11) into second place in program history and is one behind career leader Simeon Rice (13)
- Sophomore RB Chase Brown recorded a career-high with 4 receptions. His previous best was 2 catches (vs. Iowa on 12/5/20, and at Penn State on 12/19/20).
- Senior DB Kerby Joseph recorded his first-career interception with 9:30 to play in the fourth quarter. Joseph's pick ended the UVA drive at the 1-yard line.
- Redshirt freshman WR Isaiah Williams, also a converted quarterback, led the Illini in receiving for the second-consecutive game, finishing with five catches for 41 yards.
- Freshman WR Pat Bryant recorded his first-career reception in the fourth quarter of Saturday's game.

## GAME SUMMARIES

## GAME 4

MARYLAND ..... 20  
ILLINOIS ..... 17

SEPT. 17, 2021

MEMORIAL STADIUM // CHAMPAIGN, ILL. // 37,168

## SCORING BY QUARTER

Team	1	2	3	4	F
Maryland	0	3	7	10	20
Illinois	0	3	7	7	17

## SCORING SUMMARY

## Second Quarter

UMD: Petrino 32 yd FG, 10:43 (11-66, 05:07)  
ILL: McCourt 25 yd FG, 01:27 (10-73, 02:16)

## Third Quarter

UMD: Fleet-Davis 2 yd rush (Petrino kick), 13:11 (5-75, 01:49)  
ILL: McCray 38 yd rush (McCourt kick), 06:15 (8-93, 03:37)

## Fourth Quarter

ILL: Washington 30 yd rush (McCourt kick), 14:13 (3-46, 01:05)  
UMD: Fleet-Davis 10 yd pass from Tagovailoa (Petrino kick), 02:13 (8-86, 02:37)  
UMD: Petrino 32 yd FG, 00:00 (3-32, 00:47)

## TEAM STATISTICS

Category	Maryland	Illinois
First Downs	24	19
Rushes-Yards	27-131	45-150
Passing Yards	350	185
Comp-Att-Int	32-43-0	10-26-1
Total Yards	481	335
Punts-Avg	6-47.2	7-43.1
Kickoff Returns	4-254	4-260
Penalties-Yards	8-63	6-44
Fumbles-Lost	3-2	1-0
Sacks By	6-53	3-18
Third-down Conv.	2-10	8-17
Time of Possession	29:09	30:51

## INDIVIDUAL LEADERS

**RUSHING (Carries-Yards-TD):** ILL - McCray 8-60-1, Brown 14-57-0.

UMD - Fleet-Davis 11-62-1, Tagovailoa 6-43-0

**PASSING (Comp-Att-INT-TD-Yds):** ILL - Peters 10-26-1-0-185

UMD - Tagovailoa 32-43-0-1-350

**RECEIVING (Rec-Yards-TD):** ILL - Brown 2-54-0, Williams 2-47-0

UMD - Deemus 8-77-0, Jarrett 4-70-0, Jones 5-70-0

**TACKLE LEADERS (Tackles, TFL-Yds):** ILL - Adams 11, 0-0-0; Brown 9, 0-0-0; Hart 6, 1.5-8. UMD - Cross 7, 0-0-0; Mosley 6, 0-0-0; Okuyinonu 6, 2-0-21

## GAME NOTES

- Friday's loss moves the Illini to 0-2 in the series vs. Maryland.
- Tonight's game marked the fourth Friday night game in the last five years for the Illini. (also 2017 at #22 USF, 2018 vs. #10 Penn State, 2020 at Wisconsin).
- The Illini defense held Maryland out of the end zone in the first half Friday night. The Terrapins entered the game averaging 46.0 points per game overall, and had averaged 29.0 points per game in the first half of each of their first two games.
- The Terrapins entered Week 3 13th in the country in scoring, but were held to a season-low 20 points by the Illini defense.
- The Illinois defense forced Maryland's first turnover of the season in the third quarter, halting a Terrapins drive that had covered 66 yards in seven plays by forcing a fumble at the Illini 7-yard line.
- The illini offense out-rushed the Maryland ground attack, 150-131 on Friday night, with four different Illinois players recording at least 30 yards on the ground.
- Senior LB Jake Hansen recorded his first sack of the season on Friday night. Hansen finished with a game-high 12 total tackles (11 solo).
- Junior DB Jartavius Martin caused the first turnover of the season for the Maryland offense when he forced Terps running back Tayon Fleet-Davis to fumble at the Illini 7-yard line. It was the first forced fumble of the year for Martin (second career). Martin also finished with double-digit tackles, tallying 10 total tackles (7 solo).
- Junior DB Kerby Joseph recovered the Maryland fumble by Tayon Fleet-Davis, the first fumble recovery of his collegiate career.
- Maryland lost their second fumble of the third quarter on their next offensive possession when redshirt freshman LB Seth Coleman ripped the ball away from Maryland RB Penny Boone. It mark the first forced fumble and fumble recovery of Coleman's Illini career.
- True freshman RB Josh McCray's 38-yard touchdown run in the third quarter tied the game at 10. It was both McCray's first-career TD and the longest carry of his career. He is the first true freshman RB to score a touchdown for Illinois since Ra'Von Bonner (at Minnesota, 10/21/2017). McCray finished the game as the Illini's leading rusher with a career-best 60 yards on the ground.

## GAME 5

ILLINOIS ..... 9  
PURDUE ..... 13

SEPT. 25, 2021

ROSS-ADE STADIUM // WEST LAFAYETTE, IND. // 52,840

## SCORING BY QUARTER

Team	1	2	3	4	F
Illinois	0	3	3	3	9
Purdue	6	0	0	7	13

## SCORING SUMMARY

## First Quarter

PUR: Fineran 23 yd field goal, 08:31 (15-69 yards, 06:29)  
PUR: Fineran 30 yd field goal, 03:34 (6-34, 02:57)

## Second Quarter

ILL: McCourt 51 yd field goal, 02:24 (7-29, 3:40)

## Third Quarter

ILL: McCourt 35 yd field goal, 08:18 (13-58, 6:42)

## Fourth Quarter

ILL: McCourt 45 yd field goal, 14:51 (6-53,3:42)  
PUR: Sheffield 14 yd pass from O'Connell (Fineran kick), 05:44 (10-94, 3:42)

## TEAM STATISTICS

Category	ILLINOIS	PURDUE
First Downs	17	17
Rushes-Yards	42-175	26-38
Passing Yards	100	277
Comp-Att-Int	14-27-0	24-40-2
Total Yards	275	315
Punts-Avg	6-48.5	5-45.8
Kickoff Returns	0-0	0-0
Penalties-Yards	1-10	1-15
Fumbles-Lost	0-0	0-0
Sacks By	1-0	0-0
Third-down Conv.	3-20	2-12
Time of Possession	33:45	26:15

## INDIVIDUAL LEADERS

**RUSHING (Carries-Yards-TD):** ILL - McCray 24-156-0

PUR - Downing 10-40-0, Cross 7-12

**PASSING (Comp-Att-INT-TD-Yds):** ILL - Peters 14-26-0-0-100

UTSA - O'Connell 12-19-2-1-182, Plummer 12-21-0-0-95

**RECEIVING (Rec-Yards-TD):** ILL - Washington 3-31-0, Bryant 3-25-0, Williams

4-21-0. PUR - Wright 7-88-0, Yaseen 3-77, Sheffield 4-44

**TACKLE LEADERS (Tackles, TFL-Yds):** ILL - Brown 7, 0-0-0; Joseph 6, 0-0-0

Barnes T. 5, 1-0-10 PUR - Grant 8, 0-0-0; Alexander 6, 0-0-0

## GAME NOTES

- The 38 rushing yards allowed marked a season-low for the Illini defense, eclipsing the 131 yards given up on the ground vs. Maryland (9/17/21). It is the first time that the Illini have held an opponent to 50 or fewer rushing yards since allowing 10 vs. UConn (9/7/2019).
- The Illini defense also held the Boilermakers to just 315 yards of total offense, also a season-low for the Orange and Blue, besting the mark of 392 yards surrendered in the season-opening victory over Nebraska (8/28/21).
- The Illinois defense, which entered the game ranked third in the Big Ten and 22nd nationally with six takeaways, recorded two more vs. the Boilermakers with a pair of second-half interceptions.
- Senior OL duo of Vederian Lowe and Alex Palczewski each made their 45th career starts (39th consecutive for Lowe) on Saturday. They are now tied for ninth on the Illini career starts list, two starts away from the top five and three away from tying the Illini record of 48.
- The Illini defense played without senior LB Jake Hansen, who entered the game as the team's leading tackler at 7.5 tackles per game.
- Josh McCray became the first true freshman to start at RB for the Illini since Ra'Von Bonner at Minnesota (10/21/2017). Bonner and Mike Epstein each started three games as freshmen during the 2017 season.
- McCray ran for a career-most 156 yards on 24 carries vs. the Boilermakers. It marks the fifth-most rushing yards by a true freshman in program history, and the most by a true freshman RB since Ke'Shawn Vaughn recorded 180 yards against Purdue (11/7/2015).
- The combination of Bryant and RB Josh McCray marks the first time that the Illini offense has started two true freshmen on QB M.J. Rivers and WR Carlos Sandy started against Penn State (9/21/2018).
- Senior P Blake Hayes boomed a career-long 80-yard punt early in the second quarter on Saturday. It is tied for the seventh longest punt in program history (Brett Larson, 80 yards vs. Arizona, 9/16/1995).

## GAME 6

CHARLOTTE ..... 14  
ILLINOIS ..... 24

OCT. 2, 2021

MEMORIAL STADIUM // CHAMPAIGN, ILL // 30,559

## SCORING BY QUARTER

Team	1	2	3	4	F
Charlotte	7	7	0	0	14
Illinois	3	7	14	0	24

## SCORING SUMMARY

## First Quarter

ILL: McCourt 29 yd field goal, 7:28 (17-64, 07:32)  
CLT: Tucker 22 yd pass from Reynolds (Cruz kick), 2:52 (1-75, 5:57)

## Second Quarter

ILL: Barker 10 yd pass from Peters (McCourt kick), 2:52 (1-65, 5:40)  
CLT: Spencer 27 yd pass from Reynolds (Cruz kick), 0:46 (6-66, 2:06)

## Third Quarter

ILL: Brown, C. 31 yd run (McCourtkick), 6:52 (10-94, 4:52)  
ILL: Brown, C. 80 yd run (McCourt kick), 0:00 (1-80, 0:12)

## TEAM STATISTICS

Category	CHARLOTTE	ILLINOIS
First Downs	17	22
Rushes-Yards	27-72	50-336
Passing Yards	191	78
Comp-Att-Int	17-23-1	10-19-0
Total Yards	263	414
Punts-Avg	3-39	1-39
Kickoff Returns	0	0
Penalties-Yards	5-47	7-85
Fumbles-Lost	1-1	1-1
Sacks By	0	3
Third-down Conv.	4-9	8-15
Time of Possession	25:57	34:03

## INDIVIDUAL LEADERS

**RUSHING (Carries-Yards-TD):** ILL - Brown, C. 26-257-2, McCray 16-64-0

CLT - Camp 7-29-0, Reynolds 12-60-0

**PASSING (Comp-Att-INT-TD-Yds):** ILL - Peters 10-19-0-1-78

CLT Reynolds 17-23-1-2-191

**RECEIVING (Rec-Yards-TD):** ILL - Williams 3-14-0, Washington 2-18-0

CLT - DuBose 4-70-0, Tucker 5-55-1

**TACKLE LEADERS (Tackles, TFL-Yds):** ILL - Brown, S. 6, 0-0-0; Adams 5, 0-5-2

Barnes 5, 0-5-2. CLT - Alexander 10, 2-0-2; Rogers 7, 0-0-0; Whisenhunt 6, 0-0-0

## GAME NOTES

- The Fighting Illini improve to 2-4 with the 24-14 victory over Charlotte.
- Illinois tallied a season-high 414 yards of total offense on Saturday, eclipsing the 412 yards recorded in Game 2 vs. UTSA.
- The Illini rushed for 336 yards as a team, also a season-best mark. It is the most for the program since rushing for 341 yards last season at Rutgers (11/14/20).
- After surrendering 14 first-half points, the Illinois defense held Charlotte scoreless in the second half on Sunday. It marks the first time the Fighting Illini defense held an opponent scoreless in the second half of a game since a 38-10 win at Rutgers on Nov. 2, 2019.
- The Illini offense took a 17-14 lead with 6:52 left in the third quarter on a 10-play, 94-yard drive capped by a 31-yard TD run by sophomore RB Chase Brown. The 94-yard drive marked the longest scoring drive of the season for the Illini.
- On the next offensive possession, the Illini scored on their first play from scrimmage, an 80-yard TD run also by Brown.
- Sophomore running back Chase Brown rushed for a career-high 257 yards and tied his career-high with two rushing touchdowns, giving him three TDs on the season and five for his career. Brown's 257 yards are the fourth-most in a single game in program history and the third-most by a running back in college football this season.
- Brown's second TD of the game, an 80-yard score, came on the first play of the ensuing Illini possession and gave Illinois a 24-14 lead as time expired in the third quarter. The 80-yard scoring run tied for the 10th-longest in program history.
- Junior Daniel Barker hauled in his 10th career touchdown in the second quarter, breaking the Illini record for career-TD receptions by a tight end. He moved past Ken Dilger who caught nine touchdowns for the Illini from 1991-94.
- Senior OLB Owen Carney Jr. recorded two fourth-quarter sacks and now has 14 for his career which ranks 13th in program history, just one away from cracking the top 10.
- Freshman Pat Bryant became the 15th Illini in program history to start multiple games at wide receiver as a true freshman.

# GAME SUMMARIES

## GAME 7

WISCONSIN .....24  
ILLINOIS.....0

OCT. 9, 2021

MEMORIAL STADIUM // CHAMPAIGN, ILL. // 40,168

### SCORING BY QUARTER

Team	1	2	3	4	F
Wisconsin	3	7	14	0	24
Illinois	0	0	0	0	0

### SCORING SUMMARY

#### First Quarter

WIS: Larsh 25 yd field goal, 4:14 (18-67,9-44)

#### Second Quarter

WIS: Chenal 1 yd run (Larsh kick), 5:27 (14-79, 6:50)

#### Third Quarter

WIS: Mellusi 15 yd run (Larsh kick), 8:38 (13-5, 6:22) 17

WIS: Allen 23 yd run (Larsh kick), 1:00 (5-86, 2:45)

### TEAM STATISTICS

Category	WISCONSIN	ILLINOIS
First Downs	30	9
Rushes-Yards	61-391	13-26
Passing Yards	100	67
Comp-Att-Int	10-19-1	11-34-0
Total Yards	491	93
Punts-Avg	2-42	7-46.6
Kickoff Returns	5	1
Penalties-Yards	9-101	0-0
Fumbles-Lost	1-1	0-0
Sacks By	1-9	0-0
Third-down Conv.	7 of 13	1 of 12
Time of Possession	42:43	17:17

### INDIVIDUAL LEADERS

**RUSHING (Carries-Yards-TD):** ILL - Brown 8-25-0, McCray 3-1-0

WIS - Mellusi 21-145-1, Allen 18-131-1

**PASSING (Comp-Att-INT-TD-Yds):** ILL - Sitkowski 8-28-0-0-55

WIS - Mertz 10-19-1-0-100

**RECEIVING (Rec-Yards-TD):** ILL - Williams 4-23-0, Navarro 1-16-0

WIS - Pryor 2-47-0, Dike 3-22-0, Chenal J. 2-15-0

**TACKLE LEADERS (Tackles, TFL-Yds):** ILL - Brown, S. 12, 0.0-0; Barnes 12, 0.0-0;

Hart 6, 1.5-8. WIS - Burks 6, 1.5-5 Chenal L. 5, 0.5-5

### GAME NOTES

- The Fighting Illini move to 2-5 (1-3 BIG) following Saturday's loss.
- The series between the Illini and Badgers now stands at 38-44-7 overall, and 22-19-3 in Champaign.
- With a temperature of 84 degrees at kickoff, today's game was the warmest Homecoming game since 84 degrees against Purdue in 1994.
- Senior OL duo of Vederian Lowe and Alex Palczewski each made their 47th career starts. They are now tied for tied for fourth on the Illini career starts list among all positions, and tied for third among offensive linemen. They are one start from tying the Illinois record of 48.
- Lowe's start also marked his 41st consecutive. He entered the week ranked tied for 10th nationally.
- Junior DB Kerby Joseph recorded two takeaways in Saturday's game, with his third interception of the season in the second quarter, and his third fumble recovery of the year in the third quarter.
- Joseph's three interceptions are the most in a single season by an Illini player since 2019 when Sydney Brown and Dele Harding each recorded three picks. Joseph has now tallied six takeaways for the Illini defense in the last five games with interceptions at Virginia (9/11/21), at Purdue (9/25/21), and fumble recoveries vs. Maryland (9/17/21), and vs. Charlotte (10/2/21), before recording one of each today.
- RB Chase Brown broke a 23-yard run in the second quarter for the Illini. It marked the second-longest run play of the season against the Badgers' defense. He finished as the Illini's leading rusher with 35 yards on eight carries.
- Sophomore LB Tarique Barnes recorded a career-most 12 tackles on Saturday, eclipsing his previous best of 11 set last season at Wisconsin (10/23/20) and tied earlier this year vs. UTSA (9/4/21).