



LAMAR UNIVERSITY

CARDINALS

Western Athletic Conference (WAC)

2020: 2-4

Provost Umphrey Stadium

Cardinals Breakdown

Location.....Beaumont, Texas
Head Coach:Blane Morgan
Record at Lamar:2-4
Career Record:2-4
Offensive Coordinator...Patrick Covington
 Ron Antoine
Defensive Coordinator...Matt Weikert

Last League Title: N/A

Last FCS Playoff: 2018, lost first round to Northern Iowa (16-13)

Players to Watch: QB Jalen Dummett,
 RB Jaylon Jackson, DL Tylo Phillips,
 LB Aaron Calcote, CB Anthony Ruffin

Last Five Seasons

2016: 3-8, 3-6 (Southland) Coach Schultz
 Key Wins: Southeastern Louisiana, Abilene Christian University
2017: 2-9, 1-8 (Southland) Coach Schultz
2018: 7-5, 6-3 (Southland) Coach Schultz
 Key Wins: IWU, Sam Houston, Stephen F. Austin, McNeese
2019: 4-8, 2-7 (Southland) Coach Schultz
 Key Wins: Abilene Christian University, Sam Houston
2020: 2-4, 2-4 (Southland) Coach Morgan
 Key Wins: McNeese

COACH/ PROGRAM

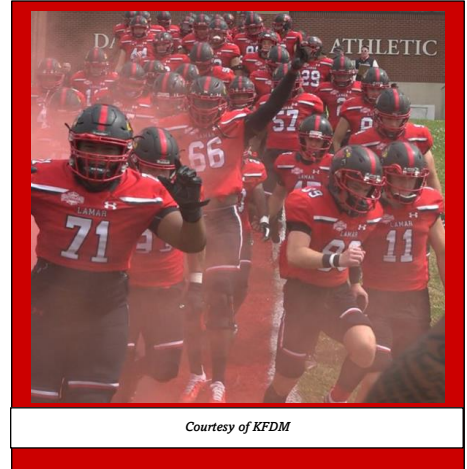
Lamar University has started and stopped its football program more times than a car in rush hour traffic. Restarting the program in 2010, the Cardinals joined the Southland Conference and made the FCS Playoffs in 2018, under Coach Mike Schultz. A season later, the Cardinals seem to be going backward. A coaching change was made, and Lamar turned to coach with nearly 20 years of experience, Blane Morgan, who became just the third coach since the university re-established the program.

Morgan also becomes the program's 10th head coach since transitioning to a four-year institution. Morgan's coaching tree begins with several well-known head coaches, Rocky Long, Fisher DeBerry, and Troy Calhoun. Morgan comes to Beaumont after spending the previous five seasons at San Diego State as the QB Coach. San Diego State recorded a 48-18 (.727) overall record during this period of time, including five Bowl game appearances (.500 record in those games), two 11-win campaigns, one 10-win season, and two Mountain West Conference championships. If the Spring 2020 season is any indication, Morgan will bring the spread-option (Triple-Option/Flexbone) offense to Lamar and try a mix of offensive sets.

Expect to see tight sets like the military service academies run, and a deep passing spread sets as he had at San Diego State. He will need an improved power run game to raise the stock of Lamar football. A transition in the offense will require offensive lineman who can master zone blocking schemes, have a quick, athletic, and decisive QB, and a group of RB

that understand the offense and are ready to carry the ball on every play. In 2020, the Cardinals only scored 16.7 ppg, and 145.5 yards rushing. Compared to Kennesaw State, who also runs the Spread Option and is one of the nation's most successful teams. In 2018, the Owls won the Big South title and made a deep playoff run, scoring more than 49 ppg and had 352 yards rushing per game. Coach Morgan will be building the offense from scratch, but if he can find the pieces, the spread-option could bring instant success to the Cardinals and frustrate defenses in the Western Athletic Conference (WAC). The best news so far for Lamar is their 2020 recruiting was nationally ranked #13, which was second in the Southland Conference. "This class was very important to us," said Morgan. "We knew it was going to be our first class that we had a full year to recruit and see some of the fruits of our labor. Our coaches have done a great job evaluating talent. Recruiting is all about relationships and getting the players and their coaches to trust us and to buy into our vision for the future. Developing those relationships is a huge part of the process and that process was obviously made much more difficult this year with COVID. Our coaching staff worked tirelessly to overcome those obstacles," added Morgan. LU returns 10 starters on offense, including five offensive linemen, and nine defensive starters. The mixture of talent, experience, and good recruiting could lead to the Cardinals shocking some new conference members.

The Cardinals did finally take the field for Coach Morgan in the Spring 2021 FCS schedule. An embarrassing 55-0 loss to Nicholls was a rough opening for the first-time head coach, but as the season progressed, the Cardinals got better, picking up an overtime win versus rival McNeese (27-26) in the *Battle of the Border* game. The Cardinals lost nine offensive linemen from 2019, so the offense started from scratch and got film on players to build around for 2021's fall season.



Courtesy of KFDM



LAMAR UNIVERSITY

CARDINALS

Western Athletic Conference (WAC)

2020: 2-4

Provost Umphrey Stadium

As the WAC held its media day, it is clear, most are not showing Lamar a lot of attention. They cardinals were picked to finish 4th, just ahead of Abilene Christian University in the WAC preseason poll and last (7th) in the AQ7 preseason poll. One bright spot is DB #5 Anthony Ruffin, who was selected All-Conference for the preseason.

2021 Preseason WAC Football Coaches Poll

Rank	Team (1st Place)	Points
1.	Sam Houston (5)	20
2.	Stephen F. Austin (1)	16
3.	Tarleton	11
4.	Lamar	8
5.	Abilene Christian	6

OFFENSE

Quarterback:

Returning their starting QB from the Spring, Lamar will lean on **#10 Jalen Dummett** (6'2" 220lbs/ Feather River College) played in and started all six games at quarterback for Lamar. He was effective completing 44-of-69 (.638) passes for 478 yards and four touchdowns with only three interceptions on the season. Dummett finished third on the team with 76 carries for 200 yards and two scores running the Spread option. Dummett was a hero for the Cardinals as he led Lamar to a win over rival McNeese; however, he was consistently inconsistent overall during the Spring. In an interview, Dummett said, "I'm really laid back." I just get out there and handle my stuff and when it is time to play I am ready. I bring a lot of energy and I am going to try to bring a lot better play from the quarterback position," said Dummett. **#9 Mike Chandler** (6'0" 190lbs/ Colorado) transferred into Lamar and saw action in three games for Lamar in 2020. In 2019, Chandler put up monster statistics for his high school, Judson. His total offensive yardage was 3,844. He posted a 62% completion percentage, threw for 2,563 through the air and tossed 25 touchdowns compared to just four interceptions. He averaged 8.4 yards per carry on the ground, rushing for 1,281 yards and scoring another 25 touchdowns. He walked onto Colorado but never took the field. Signing in December 2020, **Dane Jentsch** (5'11" 198lbs), a QB from Grandview, Texas is the only player in Texas high school football history to be named offensive and defensive MVP of a state championship game twice. Jentsch is one of the all-time winningest quarterbacks in Texas high school history (44 wins) and a two-time Johnson County MVP. He guided Grandview HS to back-to-back state titles. He tallied 9,514 passing yards in his prep career, rushed for 3,470 yards, and recorded 120 receiving yards. Jentsch was responsible for more than 160 touchdowns. Adding depth to the QB position, Coach Morgan got a two-star dual-threat QB from Houston, **Daelyn Williams** (5'10" 160lbs). Williams was named 2019 District MVP. He played in 30 games completing 308-of-531 passes (.580) for 4,320 yards and 49 touchdowns. He also carried the ball 209 times for 1098 yards (5.3 ypr) and 18 touchdowns. Williams was a standout guard on the basketball court and on the Dekaney track and field team. He received offers from Air Force, Army, Navy, and Texas Southern.

Running Back:

#7 Chaz Ward (6'0" 231lbs) was the leading rusher for Lamar from the Spring. He rushed for 271 yards and two touchdowns on 98 carries. His season-high was versus Incarnate Word (IWU), when he rushed for 105 yards. Ward has good talent and excellent vision. He is not hesitant to put his hat in the middle of the line to push for additional yards. Ward is joined in the backfield by **#20 Jaylon Jackson** (5'7" 165lbs), who showed up as a true freshman and had 49 carries for 220 yards over six games. He had a couple of costly fumbles, but he showed a spark for the future as a young talent. The three-star recruit chose Lamar over Army and Navy. His skill set is running downhill and can be shifty. There is a high ceiling for Jackson in the



LAMAR UNIVERSITY

CARDINALS

Western Athletic Conference (WAC)

2020: 2-4

Provost Umphrey Stadium

Cardinals' backfield. Like the QB group, the running back group is an area that is very low on depth. A strong recruiting class will include **RJ Carver** (5'10" 215lbs), who recorded 293 attempts for 1,598 rushing yards (5.5 ypr) and 22 touchdowns during his prep career. As a senior, he rushed for 898 yards and ten touchdowns. Carver received recruiting attention from Baylor, North Texas, Texas State, and Washington. Another RB signed by Lamar is **Damadhja Harris** (6'2" 200lbs) from Killeen, Texas. Harris carried the ball 195 times for 1,459 rushing yards as a senior (7.5 ypr). He averaged better than 104 rushing yards per game during his prep career and nearly 110 yards per game as a senior. Harris scored 12 rushing touchdowns and was a second-team all-district selection. According to Lamar sports information, Harris attended the Michael Vick V7 Camp, which leads to the question with Harris's size will he be a candidate for an option QB.

Offensive Line:

The offensive line has been a project for Coach Morgan, who was an offensive lineman at Air Force. He is replacing a ton of players and needs to find core pieces in the trenches. It could start with **#54 Bless Harris** (6'4" 295lbs) listed #1 on the depth chart at Left Tackle in 2020. He started five games before an injury forced him to off the field. Harris has good experience as he played in 10 games as a true freshman. Harris has **#65 Jacob Dicharry** (6'5" 240lbs) on the opposite side at Right Tackle. Dicharry started five games as a true freshman. A highlight from 2020 was the play of freshman **#78 Devon King** (6'2" 350lbs). King started all six games in 2020 and gained great experience to build upon in the coming season. Off the bench, **#69 Ja'Darrius Winans** (6'3" 315lbs) who brings great size to the line at the center position. He played in three games in 2020 and is another freshman that now has good experience entering 2021. **#77 Marcus Harry** (6'3" 285lbs/ JuCo) came to Lamar after one season at Tyler Junior College and played in five games in 2020, earning one start at Center. With all of the changes on the front for Lamar, the pieces that are returning from the Spring are a huge building block for Coach Morgan. It is his bread and butter to recognize talent on the offensive line, and he knows the importance of improving in all phases of the game.

Wide Receiver/ Tight End:

In the Spread Option offense, Wide Receivers and Tight Ends must be physical in the blocking game, but still have to be a threat to go downfield. The Cardinals return their leading WR from 2020, **#23 Kirkland Banks** (5'10" 176lbs), who will be a sixth-year starter. Banks reeled in 14 catches for 183 yards and got a lesson in the run-blocking game in the Spring. The leadership and experience of Banks will be a welcomed element in the Lamar locker room. This young team will need to lean on Banks and lift him as an example of what a student-athlete should look like. Additionally, playing the wings, **#6 Erik Pizarro** (5'11" 197lbs) is a redshirt junior who caught eight passes and eight carries. Pizarro is also a key special-teams player for Lamar. **#88 Conner Venetis** (6'5" 240lbs) was recruited out of Lafayette, Louisiana, as a big target who was a strong blocker. He played in five games in the Spring season and got two starts. He hauled in 5 passes and scored his first collegiate touchdown. **#44 Nathan Gaskamp** (6'1" 230lbs/ Trinity Valley CC) saw action in five games and played a B-back, and caught a touchdown out of the backfield to tie the game against McNeese, which eventually led to an overtime victory for the Cardinals. Gaskamp has the size and athletic ability to be a power runner. He carried the ball 11 times for 44 yards in the Spring. **#85 Dawud Shorts** (6'0" 218lbs) is another TE that was used in the backfield in 2020. Shorts played in five games and rushed the ball three times vs. Nicholls.

2021 Lamar Schedule

- Sept 2.....North American**
- Sept 11.....@UTSA**
- Sept 18.....@N. Colorado**
- Sept 25.....Abilene Christian**
- Oct 9.....@Sam Houston**
- Oct 16.....@Abilene Christian**
- Oct 23.....Central Arkansas**
- Oct 30...@Eastern Kentucky**
- Nov 6.....@Tarleton State**
- Nov 13.....Jacksonville State**
- Nov 20.....Stephen F. Austin**



LAMAR UNIVERSITY

CARDINALS

Western Athletic Conference (WAC)

2020: 2-4

Provost Umphrey Stadium

DEFENSE

Defensive Line:

The Cardinals' defense was dreadful in Spring 2020. The squad allowed an average of 251.7 rushing yards per game and 258.2 passing yards. They gave up an average of 41.7 ppg allowed the opponents to keep the drive alive on third down 46.5 percent of the time. There are a lot of areas to focus on, and it starts in the trenches with the defensive line. **#90 Tylo Phillips** (6'3" 290lbs/ Hinds CC) is a good place to start. Phillips was a Third-Team All-Southland Conference selection, with 23 tackles (6 solo), 4.5 Tackles-For-Loss, and 2.5 Sacks. Phillips is strong, quick, and explosive of the ball. **#94 Jack McCarthy** (6'4" 225lbs) returns to the D-line for the Cardinals after starting three games as a true freshman and seeing action in five games. He recorded 14 tackles (6 solo). McCarthy's maturation was seen by anyone following the program and he showed out against Sam Houston recording five stops (2 solo). **#91 Vincent Rollins** (6'3" 250lbs/ Asuza Pacific) returns for his second season as a red bird. Rollins played in all six games for Lamar and started the final four. He finished the Spring with 14 tackles (4 solo), had a sack, and blocked a kick on special teams. **#92 Kirsten Williams** (6'3" 226lbs/ Blinn College) will add depth and experience to the line. Williams spent the off-season with Lamar, but did not play after transferring from Binn College Buccaneers, where he was a two-year letter winner and earned All-Conference honors. Coach Cameron Davis will have his hands full of newcomers. Three defensive linemen and three defensive ends were brought in through recruiting. **Breyton Charles** (6'5" 250lbs) is a three-star athlete that received big FBS offers and drew attention from SEC schools. The Lamar coaching staff should be excited about Charles and **Jaymond Jackson** (6'3" 212lbs) a three-star from Lindale, TX. Jackson was a top 200 recruit from Texas and is a tremendous athlete who earned first-team all-district honors after recording 59 tackles, 10.5 sacks, broke up seven passes, and forced three fumbles. He also played on the offense and reeled in nine passes and five touchdowns.

Linebackers:

The linebacking corps returns **#11 Aaron Calcote** (6'0" 230lbs/ Texas Tech), who led all LB in tackles (27), which was third on the team. Calcote had 26 solo tackles and 3.0 tackles for loss, including two QB Hurries and Forced Fumbles. **#8 Desmond Veals** (6'0" 210lbs) played in all six games and recorded 20 tackles (11 solo). Veals is a hometown Beaumont kid and will be entering his sixth season with the Cardinals. **#30 Caimyn Layne** (6'0" 235lbs) returns on the inside after playing six games and starting four. Layne finished the year with 21 tackles (12 solo). He added a sack and picked off two passes. **#51 Tyler Jackson** (6'0" 220/ UIW) played one season for Incarnate Word before transferring to Lamar. He took his redshirt in 2019 and played in all six Spring games, getting one start. **#41 Kendal Rowan** (6'2" 215) played in all six games earning two starts in 2020. The time on the field could be very valuable for Lamar program that is in its infancy under a new coaching staff.

Cornerbacks/Safeties:

Nothing good comes when your defensive backs are the top two leading tacklers. That was the case in the Spring 2020 for Lamar's defense. **#5 Anthony Ruffin** (6'1" 200lbs) is a stud at the FCS level and the leader on the Cardinals' defense. Ruffin was an All-Conference selection after leading the team with 43 tackles (28 solo). He also led the team with three interceptions and four pass breakups. **#9 Kyron Norwood** (5'11" 182/ Pearl River CC) has been an asset to Lamar. Since coming to the Cardinals, Norwood has started all 18 games with the red birds. **#4 Steven Jones** (5'8" 165lbs) is a fantastic athlete who started in all six games in the Spring. Additionally, Jones runs for Lamar's Indoor Track & Field. **#19 Rodney Higdon** (5'10" 170lbs) and **#21 Courtlon Allen** (5'11" 170lbs/ Trinity Allen CC) both got good playing time in the Spring and add depth to the position. Freshman **Demarco Roberts** (5'8" 170lbs) is a three-star recruit who guided Aledo HS to consecutive Texas 5A DII State Championships. Roberts recorded 156 total tackles during his career, including 131 unassisted, and also had four interceptions, three fumble recoveries, and two forced fumbles. On the other side of the ball, Roberts recorded 89 carries for 640 rushing yards, averaged 7.2 yards per carry, rushed for 12 touchdowns. Houston, Illinois State, and Baylor all showed



LAMAR UNIVERSITY

CARDINALS

Western Athletic Conference (WAC)

2020: 2-4

Provost Umphrey Stadium

interest in Roberts out of high school. **Antorius Hambric** (5'11" 175lbs) is another fine recruit Coach Morgan drew to this program. His senior season at North Forney HS, he recorded 28 tackles (19 solo), broke up ten passes, and a pick-six. Hambric was also a standout sprinter on the NFHS track and field team. He received recruiting attention from Illinois State, Arkansas, Baylor, and Houston.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Place Kicker:

#47 Bailey Griffen (5'9" 165lbs/ Stephen F. Austin) was the lone kicker in 2020 for Lamar and earned preseason All-Conference honors. He responded as he scored 29 points on the season and was a perfect 11-of-11 on extra-point attempts. Griffen went 6-of-8 (.750) on field goals. He also was called to punt and recorded two punts for 99 yards (49.5 ypp). Griffen averaged 59.8 yards per kickoff on 18 kickoffs with 11 touchbacks. Lamar signed a five-star kicker in **Colby Sessums** (6'1" 180lbs) in the Spring. Sessums is rated as the nation's No. 10 kicker according to Kohls. He also has been recognized as a 4.5 star punter. Sessums was invited to play in the Blue-Gray All-American Game at AT&T Stadium in Arlington. He has received recognition as the eighth nationally rated kicker, and the top kicker in the state of Texas for the 2021 class. He showed off a big leg with a 63-yard field goal to win the *Kornblue* kicking competition and has routinely hit kicks of at least 60 yards during the camp. During his prep career at V.R. Eaton HS, Sessums was a perfect 10-of-10 on field-goal attempts, which included a career-best 50 yarder. He was also a perfect 41-of-41 on PATs, scored 85 points during his high school career. As a punter, he averaged 39.1 yards per punt on 27 career punts, downing six inside the 20.

Punter:

The majority of punts were handled by Enrique Carmona, who is no longer on the team. The job will likely fall to Griffen or newcomer Sessums.

Kick Returner/ Punt Returner:

Kikland Banks handled most kick returns and punt returns. Banks averaged 19.00 ypr and had a long of 37 yards. **Caimyn Layne, Steven,** and **Kyron Norwood** also have opportunities to return kicks. The special teams threat for Lamar has room for improvement.

Big Question:

Head Coach Blane Morgan is not rebuilding a football program, he is building one almost from scratch. He has the credentials that deserve patience from the Cardinals fan base. However, during the 2020 spring season, the team looked completely disorganized on the field. Tackling was abysmal in the run defense and opponents successfully threw into double coverage too many times. Anthony Ruffin was a bright spot for the defense, but he can't do it alone. The lack of aggressive, physical play led to the drubbing by #9 Nicholls to open the season. The Lamar offense only had 33 yards rushing and 54 yards passing. With COVID, spring practices and preseason drills were canceled, allowing for some understanding of the teams' on-field performance. So, the big question will be how much the team improves with another offseason under their belt.



LAMAR UNIVERSITY

CARDINALS

Western Athletic Conference (WAC)

2020: 2-4

Provost Umphrey Stadium

Grades

Offense

Jalen Dummett has to prove he can run the Morgan offense and be decisive in running and passing the football. Coach Morgan throws a lot at his QB, and Morgan likes Dummett's work ethic. Recruiting went well for the Cardinals, and new options were brought in that may put positive pressure on Dummett to succeed. Ward and Jackson struggled to find a good rhythm in the Spring, but with the offense Coach Morgan wants to run, they will be essential to the success. The offensive line will be young but more experienced for the 2021 season. Significant improvements are expected.

Grade D+ (4)

Defense

Returning players on all three levels of the defense will have to improve and get a grasp on Coach Weikert's defense. More physical play up front, fundamental tackling, and playing assignment football are areas to watch for improvement. The recruiting done by Lamar was defense-heavy, so new names and faces will be the future of Cardinals football. Anthony Ruffin is a star who makes everyone around him better. He is a fun football player to watch.

Grade D+ (4)

Special Teams

Bailey Griffen did a good job in a variety of roles and is a solid kicker. A big win in recruiting for Lamar brings in Colby Sessums, the future for the kicking game. Fans will be impressed with Sessums's kicking ability. The hope for Lamar is his soccer-style kicking translates to the college level.

Grade B+ (8)

Intangibles

As a new member of the WAC and playing in the new ASUN-WAC Challenge for 2021, Lamar has a demanding schedule. The Cardinals played a Spring schedule and picked up two wins in the Southland. Wins against rival McNeese (3-4, 2-4) and Northwestern State (1-5, 0-3) were bright spots in a tough season, but a shutout loss to Nicholls (4-3, 3-3) and a 62-7 loss to Sam Houston were hard to watch. Looking for a brighter 2021 in a new conference with familiar opponents begins vs North American University (Sep 2) before traveling to UTSA (Sept 11). Road ASUN-WAC opponents include visiting Sam Houston (Oct 9), Abilene Christian (Oct 16), Eastern Kentucky (Oct 30), and Tarleton State (Nov 6). The Cardinals welcome Abilene Christian (Sept 25) in a non-conference match, Central Arkansas (Oct 23), and wrap up the season with Jacksonville State (Nov 13) and Stephen F. Austin (Nov 20) at Provost Umphrey Stadium. No team playing in the AQ7 alliance can expect to come through unscathed. This will be one of the toughest conferences in the nation. It will also be a great test for a young Blane Morgan-built football team.

The fans at Lamar have supported the team well, averaging 7,173 fans at Provost Umphrey Stadium in 2019, and Beaumont media takes an interest in the football team. The home of Lamar was built in 1964 but renovated in 2009. The field is Matrix field turf. The Cardinals' stadium is a great venue and is well supported by alumni and local businesses to continually upgrade and continually add new stadium features.

The @LamarFootball has 18.1K followers and provides good informative and fun content. Coach Morgan seems to understand his role in drawing attention to the program. He is out and about holding press conferences and fan events to promote his team and vision.

Grade C+ (6)



LAMAR UNIVERSITY

CARDINALS

Western Athletic Conference (WAC)

2020: 2-4

Provost Umphrey Stadium

Lamar University
CARDINALS

OFFENSE **D+**

4/10

SPECIAL TEAMS **B+**

8/10

DEFENSE **D+**

4/10

INTANGIBLES **C+**

6/10

OVERALL **C**

FINAL SCORE 5.5



READ COMPLETE TEAM BREAKDOWN AT
WWW.MCCREARYBROADCASTING.COM



#10

JALEN DUMMETT
QB 6'2" 220lbs