



Game 1 | August 31, 2024 | 7 PM CT
NO. 10/11 SOUTHERN ILLINOIS (0-0) AT
BYU (0-0)
Provo, Utah | LaVell Edwards Stadium (63,470)
Series: First meeting

2023 MVFC Standings

	CONF	Pct.	ALL	Pct.	Home	Away	Ntrl	Strk
South Dakota State	8-0	1.000	15-0	1.000	9-0	4-0	2-0	W15
South Dakota	7-1	.875	10-3	.769	6-2	4-1	0-0	L1
North Dakota State	5-3	.625	11-4	.733	6-1	4-3	1-0	L1
Youngstown State	5-3	.625	8-5	.615	6-1	2-4	0-0	L1
North Dakota	5-3	.625	7-5	.583	6-1	1-4	0-0	L1
Northern Iowa	5-3	.625	6-5	.545	3-2	3-3	0-0	L2
Southern Illinois	4-4	.500	8-5	.615	4-2	4-3	0-0	L1
Illinois State	4-4	.500	6-5	.545	4-2	2-3	0-0	L1
Missouri State	3-5	.375	4-7	.364	3-2	1-5	0-0	L1
Murray State	1-7	.125	2-9	.182	2-3	0-6	0-0	L7
Indiana State	1-7	.125	1-10	.091	1-4	0-6	0-0	L1
Western Illinois	0-8	.000	0-11	.000	0-5	0-6	0-0	L11

Stats & Schedule: valley-football.org

2024 Southern Illinois Schedule

Date	Opponent	Time (CT)	Result	TV
Aug. 31	at BYU	7 PM		ESPN+
Sept. 7	at Austin Peay	6 PM		ESPN+
Sept. 14	Incarnate Word	6 PM		ESPN+
Sept. 21	SEMO (FW)	6 PM		ESPN+
Sept. 28	at South Dakota	1 PM		ESPN+
Oct. 5	Illinois State	6 PM		ESPN+
Oct. 12	North Dakota State (HC)	6 PM		ESPN+
Oct. 26	at Indiana State	12 PM		ESPN+
Nov. 2	at Missouri State	2 PM		ESPN+
Nov. 9	Youngstown State	12 PM		ESPN+
Nov. 16	at South Dakota State	2 PM		ESPN+
Nov. 23	Murray State	12 PM		ESPN+

Listen: Luke Martin, Mike Trude, Pat Poore. WCIL-FM 101.5. SIU Salukis mobile app.
Watch on ESPN+: Live Stats: www.siusalukis.com

Salukis vs. the FBS

Since becoming a I-AA/FCS member in 1982, SIU is 6-36 versus FBS teams. Nick Hill was involved in five of the wins as either a player (Indiana-2006, Northern Illinois-2007) or head coach (UMass-2019, Northwestern-2022, Northern Illinois-2023).

SIU is 0-5 all-time against the Big 12, with the most recent game a 31-23 loss at Kansas State on Sept. 11, 2021.

Third trip to Utah

The Salukis will make their third appearance in the state of Utah. They beat Southern Utah (44-10) on Sept. 15, 2007, and beat Weber State (34-31) in a playoff game on April 24, 2020.

Postseason success under Hill

Of SIU's 11 playoff appearances in school history, Hill was the quarterback of two teams (2006, 2007) and head coach of three (2020, 2021, 2023). The Salukis have won 11 playoff games in school history and Hill was a part of six of them (quarterbacked three wins and coached three more).

Since 2019, only three FCS programs have won three or more playoff games (South Dakota State, North Dakota State and Southern Illinois).

A new QB for first time in 37 games

The Salukis will have a new starter at quarterback for the first time since the 2021 COVID spring season. Nic Baker, the school's career passing leader, started all 37 games the last three seasons.

The contenders for the starting spot

are returnee Hunter Simmons (6-3, 215, Jr.), who has appeared in six games at SIU and completed 18-of-35 passes with 1 TD and 1 INT, and DJ Williams (6-3, 218, Jr.), who transferred from Murray State, where he appeared in 24 games (2021-23), completing 127-of-214 passes with 10 TDs and 8 INTs. Williams was 6-9 in 15 career starts with the Racers.

2024 Preseason All-MVFC

Despite entering the season ranked No. 10 in the nation in the FCS, the Salukis had no players named to the preseason All-MVFC team.

WR Vinson Davis III	2nd Team
C Chase Evans	2nd Team
LB Colin Bohanek	2nd Team
S Ubayd Steed	2nd Team
TE Aidan Quinn	Honorable Mention
G Jake Green	Honorable Mention

Salukis return deep, experienced O-line

The Salukis return four starters on the offensive line with a total of 103 games of starting experience. C Chase Evans (38), G Jake Green (27), OT Abdou Toure (19) and G Derek Harden Jr. (19).

In addition, the Salukis have two transfers currently listed as starters on the O-line: OT Noah Fenske (Colorado) and G Alex Robarge (Akron).

Salukis re-load at running back

With the graduation of two of the top-ranked rushers in school history (Ro Elliott and Justin Strong), the Salukis will have a new look at tailback.

Junior Shaun Lester Jr. is the returnee with the most experience, having played

in 15 games at SIU with 507 yards and 5 TDs. Senior Jaelin Benefield rushed for 291 yards and caught 20 passes in 2023.

Transfers Wiltrell Hartson (Ohio State) and Eddie Robinson (Duquesne) could make an immediate impact.

Thirteen transfers on the two deep

Of the 23 transfers added during the offseason, 13 are listed on the initial two-deep depth chart.

Six are on the Offense two-deep: QB DJ Williams (Murray State), WR Nah'shawn Hezekiah (Howard) WR Keontez Lewis (Wisconsin), WR Bradley Clark (Tennessee Tech), G Alex Robarge (Akron), OT Cameron Dye (Georgia State).

Six are on the Defense two-deep: LB Shug Walker (Murray State), S Isaiah Bigby (Minot State) S Johnny Schmitt (Illinois), CB Sebastian Vargas (Florida), CB Jeremiah Baxter (Frostburg State), CB Jeremiah McClendon (Florida International)

Top-10 Defense in 2023

Under the direction of first-year defensive coordinator Antonio James, the Salukis had one of the best defensive units in school history, ranking in the Top 10 of the FCS in numerous categories.

- 4th in points allowed (16.2 points/game)
- 4th in total yards allowed (282.3 yards/game)
- 5th in run defense (94.2 yards/game)
- 6th in sacks (3.00 sacks/game)
- 7th in pass efficiency defense (111.73)
- 4th in 4th down conversion percentage (.333)
- 4th in fumbles recovered (13)
- 7th in turnovers gained (25)



2023 Southern Illinois Team Rankings

Category	Nation	MVFC	Value
3rd Down Conversion Pct (122 ranked)	80	9	0.349
3rd Down Conversion Pct Defense (122 ranked)	50	4	0.374
4th Down Conversion Pct (121 ranked)	17	7	0.636
4th Down Conversion Pct Defense (121 ranked)	8	1	0.333
Blocked Kicks (70 ranked)	44	4	2
Blocked Kicks Allowed (122 ranked)	47	6	2
Blocked Punts (18 ranked)	18	2	1
Blocked Punts Allowed (122 ranked)	1	1	0
Completion Percentage (122 ranked)	26	8	0.640
Defensive TDs (54 ranked)	12	1	3
Fewest Penalties (122 ranked)	106	10	85
Fewest Penalties Per Game (122 ranked)	83	12	6.54
Fewest Penalty Yards (122 ranked)	95	9	687
Fewest Penalty Yards Per Game (122 ranked)	61	6	52.85
First Downs Defense (122 ranked)	49	3	216
First Downs Offense (122 ranked)	35	7	235
Fumbles Lost (122 ranked)	88	11	9
Fumbles Recovered (122 ranked)	4	1	13
Kickoff Return Defense (122 ranked)	14	2	16.76
Kickoff Returns (122 ranked)	83	6	18.19
Net Punting (122 ranked)	53	8	36.32
Passes Had Intercepted (122 ranked)	33	7	8
Passes Intercepted (119 ranked)	23	3	12
Passing Offense (122 ranked)	44	5	223.8
Passing Yards Allowed (122 ranked)	28	4	188.2
Passing Yards per Completion (122 ranked)	68	8	11.55
Punt Return Defense (122 ranked)	73	8	9.21
Punt Returns (122 ranked)	109	10	3.55
Red Zone Defense (122 ranked)	34	2	0.767
Red Zone Offense (122 ranked)	54	9	0.818
Rushing Defense (122 ranked)	5	2	94.2
Rushing Offense (122 ranked)	92	8	117.8
Sacks Allowed (122 ranked)	107	11	3.08
Scoring Defense (122 ranked)	4	2	16.2
Scoring Offense (122 ranked)	61	8	25.5
Tackles for Loss Allowed (122 ranked)	76	9	5.92
Team Passing Efficiency (122 ranked)	41	9	137.02
Team Passing Efficiency Defense (122 ranked)	7	2	111.73
Team Sacks (122 ranked)	6	2	3.00
Team Tackles for Loss (121 ranked)	12	1	7.3
Time of Possession (122 ranked)	88	9	28:49
Total Defense (122 ranked)	4	2	282.3
Total Offense (122 ranked)	74	9	341.6
Turnover Margin (122 ranked)	17	3	0.62
Turnovers Gained (121 ranked)	7	3	25
Turnovers Lost (122 ranked)	67	8	17

Southern Illinois Individual Rankings

Statistic	Player	Nation	MVFC	Value
Completion Percentage	Nic Baker	19	8	0.658
Passing Yards	Nic Baker	22	3	2,543
Passes Defended	DJ Johnson	30	1	1.0
	Mark Davis	38	2	1.0
Rushing TDs	Ro Elliott	36	5	9
Tackles For Loss	PJ Jules	59	3	1.0
Total Tackles	PJ Jules	39	5	8.7

James named defensive coordinator on Aug. 1, 2023

Assistant head coach Antonio James was promoted to defensive coordinator on Aug. 1, 2023 — one day before the start of training camp last season. He replaced D.J. Vokolek, who departed for Northwestern.

Notable defensive numbers in 2023

- The defense did not allow a touchdown in four games — Murray State, Western Illinois, Indiana State, Nicholls State.
- The defense allowed only two touchdowns in the last 12 quarters.
- The defense allowed only one Red Zone TD pass (vs. Missouri State)
- The defense scored three touchdowns.

MVFC PRESEASON POLL

1. South Dakota State (42)	482
2. North Dakota State (1)	437
3. South Dakota	371
4. Southern Illinois	293
5. North Dakota	276
6. Illinois State	264
7. Youngstown State	255
8. Northern Iowa	227
9. Missouri State (1)	164
10. Indiana State	68
11. Murray State	67

Vinson Davis III is SIU's top returning receiving threat

After transferring from Charleston Southern last year, Vinson Davis III led SIU with 54 catches for 659 yards and 3 TDs. He was also second in kickoff returns in the MVFC (20.86 ave).

Four transfer wideouts could make big impact

SIU has eight wide receivers on the roster, including four transfers who could all make an immediate impact. Keontez Lewis (Wisconsin) and Nah'Shawn Hezekiah (Howard) are both listed as starters. Bradley Clark (Tennessee Tech) is Hezekiah's backup, and Tae Marrero (Charleston) is also in the playing mix and is featured in the return game.

No returning starters, but plenty of returning experience on D-line

Seniors DE Devin Cowan, NT Kam Bowdry and DE Tim Varga started all 12 games last season. Even with those three graduating, the Salukis return seven players along the defensive front from 2023: DT Peyton Reeves (17 tackles, 1.5 sacks), DE Dewey Greene (14 tackles, 1.5 sacks), DE Louis Wilbert (13 tackles, 1.0 sack), DT Caden Reeves (8 tackles), DT Devin Love (6 tackles, 0.5 sack), DT Amir Dwight (3 tackles, 1 sack) and DT Jaylen Banks (3 tackles).

Linebacker corps features pair of Murray State transfers

LB Colin Bohanek transferred to SIU from Murray State in 2023 and LB Shug Walker followed suit in 2024.

Bohanek was a 2nd-Team All-OVC pick in 2022 and was named to the MVFC's All-Newcomer team in 2023, after he started all 12 games for Southern and recorded 62 tackles.

Walker led Murray State in tackles (78) and tackles for loss (5.5) in 2023.

Safeties Ubayd Steed and Iverson Brown headline secondary

S Ubayd Steed and S Iverson Brown combined to start 24 games for SIU last season.

Steed started every game in 2023, ranked third on the team in tackles (83) and was named to the MVFC Newcomer Team. He had the game-clinching interception in the win at Northern Illinois.

Brown made 11 starts and recorded 33 tackles with a pair of forced fumbles.

Paul Geelen will handle kicking duties

A native of the Netherlands, Paul Geelen is SIU's new kicker and punter. Last year at William Jewell College, he was 8-of-9 on field goals, including 5-for-5 on attempts beyond 40 yards. He also averaged 43.7 yards per punt, and 40 of his 84 career kickoffs went for touchbacks

One of two FCS teams to beat FBS opponents in both 2022 and 2023

Southern Illinois was one of two FCS teams that beat FBS opponents in both 2022 and 2023. The Salukis defeated Northwestern in 2022 and beat Northern Illinois in 2023. Sacramento State beat Colorado State (2022) and Stanford (2023).



Saluki Football in the last four seasons...

- Three FCS Playoff appearances and three playoff wins
- 11-11 against FCS ranked teams, including wins over No. 1, No. 2, No. 3 and No. 4.
- Power Five win at Northwestern (9/17/22) — the only FCS team to beat a Power Five in 2022
- FBS win at Northern Illinois (9/6/23)
- FCS Playoffs Elite 8 (Spring, 2021)
- Playoffs Sweet 16 (Fall, 2021, 2023)
- Nineteen weeks ranked in the FCS Top 10, as high as No. 3 (Oct. 25, 2021)

Eight-straight wins versus in-state rivals

SIU has won its last eight games against in-state schools (Northern Illinois, Northwestern, Illinois State twice, Western Illinois four times)

Quick Facts

- S Jeffery Wells (19) is the team's active career leaders in special teams tackles.
- G Jake Green has the longest active streak of games started (24).
- C Chase Evans leads the team with 38 career starts.

Salukis on active NFL rosters

- SIU currently has three active players on NFL rosters — S Jeremy Chinn (Washington), TE MyCole Pruitt (Pittsburgh) and S PJ Jules (Cincinnati).
- Chinn was a second-round draft pick (64th overall) in the 2020 draft and runner-up for Defensive Rookie of the Year.
- Pruitt enters his 10th NFL season with 71 catches and 12 TDs.

Salukis' NFL Tradition

- 42 SIU football alums went on to play in the NFL
- RB Brandon Jacobs was a two-time Super Bowl Champion with New York Giants.
- QB Jim Hart was a four-time Pro Bowl selection who threw for 34,665 career yards with the St. Louis Cardinals. Later, he served as SIU's director of athletics.
- LB Bart Scott was an 11-year NFL pro with the Baltimore Ravens and New York Jets.
- OL Carl Mauck was a 13-year NFL veteran and a 21-year NFL assistant coach (OL).

Related — or Not?

Brothers

DT Kenny Butler III and DE Kris Butler
 WR Allen Middleton and WR Timothy Middleton II
 DL Caden Reeves, DL Peyton Reeves (not related to K Chase Reeves)

Not related

WR Bradley Clark, LS Jace Clark, TE Clayton Clark
 LB Stephen Green, G Jake Green, WR Gage Green
 CB DJ Johnson, CB Drake Johnson
 CB Denym Mitchell, WR Dayton Mitchell

Power Five upset

The Salukis were the only FCS program to beat a Power Five opponent in 2022, topping Northwestern, 31-24. After trailing, 14-7, in the second quarter, Southern roared back to take a 31-17 lead in the fourth.

SIU is 2-19 all-time against Power Five opponents, and head coach Nick Hill was a key factor in both wins. In 2006, Hill threw four touchdown passes and orchestrated a 35-28 win at Indiana.

Since becoming a I-AA/FCS member in 1982, SIU is 6-36 versus FBS teams. Hill quarterbacked two of the wins (Indiana in 2006, Northern Illinois in 2007) and was head coach for three more (UMass

in 2019, Northwestern in 2022, Northern Illinois in 2023).

In 11 Playoff Appearances, SIU is 11-10

- 1983:** Beat Indiana St. in the first round 23-7, beat Nevada in the second round 23-7 and beat Western Carolina in Charleston, SC for the **1AA Championship**, 43-7.
- 2003:** Lost at Delaware in the first round, 45-7.
- 2004:** Lost to Eastern Washington in the first round, 35-31.
- 2005:** Won at Eastern Illinois in the first round 21-6 and lost at Appalachian St. in the second round, 38-24.
- 2006:** Beat UT-Martin 36-30 in the first round and lost at Montana 20-3 in the second round.
- 2007:** Beat Eastern Illinois 30-11 in the first round, beat Massachusetts 34-27 in the second round and lost to Delaware in the **Final Four**, 20-17.
- 2008:** Lost to New Hampshire in the first round, 29-20.
- 2009:** Beat Eastern Illinois, 48-7 in the first round and lost to William and Mary in the second round, 24-3.
- 2020-21 (Spring):** Won at Weber St. in the first round, 34-31 and lost at South Dakota St. in the **Elite Eight**, 31-26.
- 2021:** Won at South Dakota in the first round, 22-10. Lost at North Dakota State in the second round, 38-7.
- 2023:** Beat Nicholls State, 35-0. Lost at Idaho, 20-17 (OT)

Nick Hill versus ...

	H	A	All
Arkansas State	0-0	0-1	0-1
Austin Peay	1-0	0-0	1-0
Dayton	1-0	0-0	1-0
Florida Atlantic	0-0	0-1	0-1
Idaho	0-0	0-1	0-1
Illinois State	2-1	1-2	3-3
Incarname Word	0-0	0-1	0-1
Indiana State	1-2	3-0	4-2
Kansas State	0-0	0-1	0-1
Memphis	0-0	0-1	0-1
Missouri State	2-2	2-2	4-4
Mississippi	0-0	0-1	0-1
Miss. Valley St.	1-0	0-0	1-0
Murray State	1-0	2-0	3-0
Nicholls State	1-0	0-0	1-0
Northwestern	0-0	1-0	1-0
North Dakota	2-0	0-1	2-1
North Dakota St.	1-1	0-4	1-5
Northern Illinois	0-0	1-0	1-0
Northern Iowa	1-2	0-2	1-4
SEMO	2-2	3-1	5-3
Southeastern La.	1-0	0-0	1-0
South Dakota	1-2	2-2	3-3
South Dakota St.	0-4	1-3	1-7
UMass	0-0	1-0	1-0
UT Martin	1-0	0-0	1-0
Weber State	0-0	1-0	1-0
Western Illinois	2-1	3-1	5-2
Youngstown St.	1-2	1-4	2-6
TOTAL	22-19	22-29	44-48

vs. FCS Coaches Top 25.....	14-24
vs. FCS Coaches Top 10.....	8-13
vs. Unranked FCS Teams	25-19
When Ranked.....	24-17
vs. FBS Teams	3-5
Home.....	22-19
Road.....	22-29
Neutral	0-0
Conference.....	26-36
When rushing for 200+	17-10
When passing for 300+	9-12
When scoring 35+	27-6
Opponents score <10.....	10-0
When forcing 3 or more TOs.....	17-4
When SIU scores first	25-21
When SIU leads at half	31-17
When SIU trails at half	9-30
When SIU is tied at half	4-1
When leading after third.....	37-10
When trailing after third.....	6-36
When tied after third.....	0-1
Games decided 3 or less	8-11
Games decided by 11+.....	28-20
Games decided by 8-10.....	4-6
Games decided by 4-7.....	4-11

Shutout vs. Nicholls

SIU claimed the first postseason shutout in school history last Saturday, blanking Nicholls State, 35-0. The contest marked Southern's first home playoff game in stadium history (Saluki Stadium opened in 2010). Southern scored three touchdowns in the first quarter and two more in the third. The offense was balanced through the air (181 yards) and on the ground (177 yards).

Quick Facts

Carbondale, Illinois is located in the southern tip of the state — about a five-hour drive south of Chicago and two hours southeast of



St. Louis...Many of SIU's alums are concentrated in those two cities... The Southern Illinois region is informally known as "Little Egypt," hence the adoption of the Saluki (an Egyptian hunting dog) as the school mascot.

The Golden Era of Saluki Football (Coach Jerry Kill 2003-09)

- Overall Record: 70-19 (.787)
• Conference Record: 42-8 (.840)
• Conference Championships: 5 (2003, 2004, 2005, 2008, 2009)
• FBS Wins: at Indiana (2006), at Northern Illinois (2007)
• FCS Playoff Appearances: All 7 years
• FCS Playoff Wins: 5
• Deepest Postseason Run: Final Four in 2007, Nick Hill's senior year
• Weeks in Top 25: 99-consecutive weeks from 2003 to 2010
• Weeks at No. 1: 18 weeks during 2004 and 2005

Famous non-football SIU alums

- Kenny Troutt, owner of WinStar Farm and 2018 Triple Crown winner Justify
• Walt Frazier, ex-NBA star.
• Dave Stieb and Steve Finley, MLB All-Stars
• Mark Newman, former New York Yankees Senior VP (deceased)
• Derek Shelton, Pittsburgh Pirates manager
• Curt Jones, inventor and founder of Dippin' Dots
• Dick Gregory, civil rights activist, author, and comedian (deceased)
• Joan Higginbotham, NASA astronaut who flew on the Space Shuttle Discovery
• Donald McHenry, former US ambassador to the United Nations
• Bob Odenkirk, Jim Belushi, Dennis Franz and Richard Roundtree, actors
• Hannibal Buress, comedian
• Jenny McCarthy and Melissa McCarthy, actresses

Why the Saluki?

Southern Illinois had been known as the Maroons since intercollegiate athletics began in 1913. The name "Salukis" became official on March 19, 1951, when the student body overwhelmingly approved the dog as the new symbol of SIU athletics, easily besting "Rebels," "Knights," "Flyers," "Marauders," and "Maroons."

The oldest purebred dogs in the world with records dating back to 3600 B.C., the Saluki is an ancient Egyptian hunting dog known for its speed and hunting prowess.

So why is the name Salukis relevant to Southern Illinois? Natives of southern Illinois know that the region is frequently referred to as "Egypt." Historian Baker Brownell, in his book "The Other Illinois," explained how the region came to be known as Egypt.

He wrote, "There was a drought in the northern counties (of Illinois) in the early 1800s... the wheat fields dried up, the streams dried in their beds. But in Southern Illinois, rain fell and there were good crops, and from the north came people seeking corn and wheat as to Egypt of old. Thus, the name, Egypt."

The 19th century drought in Illinois parallels the Biblical account of the country of Egypt.

"There was famine in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. All the earth came to Egypt to Joseph to buy grain, because the famine was so severe. And (Jacob) said, 'Behold, I have heard that there is grain in Egypt; go down and buy grain for us there, that we may live, and not die.' So, 10 of Joseph's brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt." (Genesis 41:54b, 57, 42:2-3).

In Egypt at that time, Salukis were accepted as the finest animal a family could possess. Adopting such a well-respected dog as its mascot fit perfectly for a school in a region known as "Little Egypt."

King Tut's Tomb

King Tut was the school's first live Saluki mascot after the

Stats Perform FCS Top 25

Table with 5 columns: Rank, Team (First-Place Votes), Last Year, Points, Prev. Lists 25 teams including South Dakota State, North Dakota State, Montana, etc.

Others Receiving Votes (schools listed on two or more ballots): Elon 174; UT Martin 169; Eastern Illinois 139; Mercer 98; Florida A&M 65; North Carolina Central 52; Austin Peay 51; Alabama State 17; Holy Cross 17; Eastern Washington 14; Drake 8; Duquesne 8; Harvard 6; Samford 6; Northern Iowa 4

FCS Coaches Poll

Table with 5 columns: Rank, Team (First-Place Votes), Record, Points, Prev. Lists 25 teams including South Dakota St., North Dakota St., Montana, etc.

Weber St., 66; North Carolina Central, 53; Eastern Illinois, 50; UT Martin, 38; Austin Peay, 35; Northern Iowa, 33; Harvard, 32; Yale, 31; Mercer, 27; Holy Cross, 20; Howard, 20; Alabama St., 17; Northern Arizona, 17; Elon, 16; Alcorn St., 9; Duquesne, 7; North Carolina A&T, 6; Fordham, 5; Gardner-Webb, 4; Indiana St., 3; Missouri St., 3; Butler, 2; Eastern Kentucky, 2; Southeast Missouri St., 2; Eastern Washington, 1; Murray St., 1; Samford, 1; Utah Tech, 1.

nickname change from Maroons to Salukis in 1951. King Tut died in 1954 after being struck by a car, and a concrete pyramid was placed in his honor at McAndrew Stadium. The marker was moved to its current spot outside Saluki Stadium in 2010. Before each home game, the Salukis walk from their locker room and pat Tut's marker for good luck.



Saluki Offense 2-Deep

WR	11	Nah'shawn Hezekiah, 6-2, 210 Sr.
	9	Bradley Clark, 6-0, 208, Sr.
WR	1	Keontez Lewis, 6-2, 190, Jr.
	13	Jay Jones, 6-4, 205, Jr.
WR	0	Vinson Davis III, 5-8, 175, Jr.
	15	Allen Middleton, 5-11, 190, rFr.
LT	53	Noah Fenske, 6-6, 310, Sr.
	73	Coleon Smith, 6-6, 310, Jr.
LG	65	Alex Robarge, 6-5, 310, Sr.
	61	Aidan Logan, 6-6, 320, Sr.
C	62	Chase Evans, 6-4, 300, Sr.
	75	Jon Nalley, 6-6, 300, Jr.
RG	79	Jake Green, 6-5, 310, Sr.
	77	Marcelo Mendiola, 6-4, 320, Sr.
RT	70	Abdou Toure, 6-6, 300, Sr.
	60	Cameron Dye, 6-4, 300, Jr.
QB	18	Hunter Simmons, 6-3, 215, Jr. OR
	2	DJ Williams, 6-3, 218, Jr.
RB	28	Shaun Lester Jr., 5-11, 210, Sr.
	3	Jaelin Benefield, 5-11, 183, Sr.
TE	83	Ryan Schwendeman, 6-5, 245, So.
	48	Colton Hoag, 6-3, 240, Sr.

Saluki Defense 2-Deep

DE	58	Jamond Mathis, 6-3, 245, rFr.
	22	Louis Wilbert, 6-2, 240, Jr.
DT	90	Peyton Reeves, 6-2, 315, Jr.
	65	Devin Love, 6-3, 310, Sr.
DE	9	Dewey Greene, 6-3, 260, Sr.
	99	Caden Reeves, 6-3, 285, Jr.
LB	6	Chris Presto, 6-2, 218, So.
	42	Shane Roth, 5-10, 210, Jr.
LB	16	Colin Bohanek, 6-0, 227, Sr.
	37	Miles Wash, 5-11, 222, rFr.
LB	33	Shug Walker, 6-2, 225, Jr.
	35	Ben Bogle, 6-2, 225, So.
CB	4	Jamir Conn, 6-0, 180, So.
	13	Sebastian Vargas, 6-1, 190, rFr.
S	5	Cejai Parson, 6-2, 195, Jr.
	12	Johnny Schmitt, 6-1, 190, rFr.
S	7	Ubayd Steed, 5-11, 195, Sr.
	10	Isaiah Bigby, 5-11, 205, Sr.
S	1	Iverson Brown, 6-2, 207, Sr.
	2	Desman Hearnns, 6-0, 195, So.
CB	8	Jeremiah McClendon, 6-0, 185, Jr.
	17	Jeremiah Baxter, 6-2, 198, Sr.

Saluki Specialists 2-Deep

K	97	Paul Geelen, 6-6, 205, Jr.
	98	Chase Reeves, 6-2, 190, So.
KO	97	Paul Geelen, 6-6, 205, Jr.
	98	Chase Reeves, 6-2, 190, So.
P	97	Paul Geelen, 6-6, 205, Jr.
	98	Chase Reeves, 6-2, 190, So.
LS	44	Ross Pedro, 6-0, 225, Jr.
	51	Jace Clark, 6-1, 210, rFr.
H	85	Ryan LaHood, 6-3, 195, So.
	82	Dayton Mitchell, 5-11, 185, Jr.
KR	8	Tae Marrero Jr., 5-10, 185, Jr.
	0	Vinson Davis III, 5-8, 175, Jr.
PR	8	Tae Marrero Jr., 5-10, 185, Jr.
	0	Vinson Davis III, 5-8, 175, Jr.

2023 Game-By-Game Starters

Opponent	LT	LG	C	RG	RT	QB	RB	WR/TE	WR	WR	TE	K
Austin Peay	Green	Harden Jr.	Caughell	Evans	Toure	Baker	Elliott	Cox	Hartrup	Davis III	Quinn	Baumgarte
at Northern Illinois	Green	Harden Jr.	Caughell	Evans	Toure	Baker	Elliott	Gibson	Hartrup	Davis III	Quinn	Burks
at SEMO	Green	Harden Jr.	Caughell	Evans	Toure	Baker	Elliott	Cox	Hartrup	Davis III	Quinn	Burks
Missouri State	Green	Harden Jr.	Caughell	Evans	Toure	Baker	Elliott	Schwendeman	Hartrup	Davis III	Quinn	Burks
at Youngstown State	Green	Harden Jr.	Caughell	Evans	Toure	Baker	Strong	Gibson	Hartrup	Davis III	Quinn	Burks
at Murray State	Green	Harden Jr.	Caughell	Evans	Toure	Baker	Strong	Schwendeman	Hartrup	Davis III	Quinn	Burks
South Dakota State	Green	Harden Jr.	Caughell	Evans	Toure	Baker	Strong	Cox	Hartrup	Davis III	Quinn	Burks
at Western Illinois	Green	Harden Jr.	Caughell	Evans	Toure	Baker	Strong	Cox	Hartrup	Davis III	Quinn	Burks
South Dakota	Green	Harden Jr.	Caughell	Evans	Toure	Baker	Strong	Cox	Hartrup	Davis III	Quinn	Burks
at North Dakota State	Green	Harden Jr.	Caughell	Evans	Toure	Baker	Strong	Schwendeman	Hartrup	Davis III	Quinn	Baumgarte
Indiana State	Green	Neuman	Caughell	Logan	Toure	Baker	Strong	Schwendeman	Hartrup	Cox	Quinn	Baumgarte
Nicholls State	Green	Harden Jr.	Caughell	Evans	Toure	Baker	Elliott	Cox	Hartrup	Davis III	Quinn	Baumgarte
at Idaho	Green	Harden Jr.	Caughell	Evans	Toure	Baker	Elliott	Cox	Hartrup	Davis III	Quinn	Baumgarte

Opponent	DE	NT	DE	LB/DT	LB	LB	CB	S	S	S	CB	P
Austin Peay	Cowan	Bowdry	Varga	Combs	Smith	Bohanek	Davis Jr.	Jules	Steed	Brown	Johnson	Torney
at Northern Illinois	Cowan	Bowdry	Varga	Combs	Burrola	Bohanek	Davis Jr.	Jules	Steed	Brown	Johnson	Torney
at SEMO	Cowan	Bowdry	Varga	Combs	Smith	Bohanek	Davis Jr.	Jules	Steed	Hearnns	Johnson	Torney
Missouri State	Cowan	Bowdry	Varga	Combs	Smith	Bohanek	Davis Jr.	Jules	Steed	Hearnns	Johnson	Torney
at Youngstown State	Cowan	Bowdry	Varga	Combs	Smith	Bohanek	Davis Jr.	Jules	Steed	Brown	Johnson	Torney
at Murray State	Cowan	Bowdry	Varga	Combs	Smith	Bohanek	Davis Jr.	Jules	Steed	Brown	Johnson	Torney
South Dakota State	Cowan	Bowdry	Varga	Combs	Smith	Bohanek	Davis Jr.	Jules	Steed	Brown	Johnson	Torney
at Western Illinois	Cowan	Bowdry	Varga	Combs	Smith	Bohanek	Davis Jr.	Jules	Steed	Brown	Johnson	Torney
South Dakota	Cowan	Bowdry	Varga	Cleveland	Burrola	Bohanek	Davis Jr.	Jules	Steed	Brown	Johnson	Torney
at North Dakota State	Cowan	Bowdry	Varga	Cleveland	Combs	Bohanek	Davis Jr.	Jules	Steed	Brown	Johnson	Torney
Indiana State	Cowan	Bowdry	Varga	Combs	Smith	Bogle	Davis Jr.	Jules	Steed	Brown	Johnson	Torney
at Idaho	Cowan	Bowdry	Varga	Combs	Smith	Bohanek	Davis Jr.	Jules	Steed	Brown	Johnson	Torney



Entering his ninth season as head coach in 2024, Nick Hill has elevated his alma mater into one of the elite programs in FCS Football.

A native son of Southern Illinois and one of Saluki Football's all-time great quarterbacks, Hill made it his mission to restore the program to its place among the nation's best. By any standard, he has achieved that goal.

Playing in the toughest conference at the FCS level, the Salukis have advanced to the playoffs three times in the last four seasons. Southern is one of only four FCS programs to accomplish this feat, joining North Dakota State, South Dakota State and Montana.

SIU was one of only two FCS teams in the nation to beat FBS opponents in both 2022 (Northwestern) and 2023 (Northern Illinois), joining Sacramento State, which beat Colorado State (2022) and Stanford (2023).

In its history, Saluki Football has won six games against FBS-level teams, and Hill has been a part of five of those wins (two as starting quarterback, three as head coach).

The Salukis have dominated in-state competition under Hill, winning their last eight games against in-state schools (Northern Illinois, Northwestern, Illinois State twice, Western Illinois four times).

Southern has beaten 11 ranked FCS teams in the last four seasons, including wins over the No. 1, No. 2, No. 3 and No. 4-ranked opponents.

Since 2020, the Salukis have been nationally ranked for 43 weeks, including 18 weeks in the top 10 and as high as No. 3. They enter the 2024 season having been ranked every week since Week 1 of 2023.

SIU has won three playoff games in the last four seasons, winning at Weber State (2020), at South Dakota (2021) and versus Nicholls State (2023), in the first home playoff game in Saluki Stadium history.

The program has produced multiple NFL players during Hill's tenure, including safeties Jeremy Chinn and Ryan Neal, cornerbacks Craig James and Madre Harper, plus tight end MyCole Pruitt. Chinn was a second-round draft pick of the Carolina Panthers and the 64th player chosen overall in 2020.

A leader on and off the field, Hill won the 2023 Fellowship of Christian Athletes Grant Teaff Coach of the Year Award, sponsored by the AFCA.

Hill's journey to the top job at SIU started just 20 miles north of campus, where he was a football and basketball icon at DuQuoin High School. During his senior year of high school in 2002-03, Hill was the area's Player of the Year in both sports and guided the Indians to the Illinois High School Association 3A state championship football game.

The legend continued on the hardwood where Hill averaged 23 points as a senior at Du Quoin and chose Western Kentucky from a host of Division I offers. A broken hand prematurely ended his freshman season at Western but ultimately led him home.

In the spring of 2004, Hill transferred to SIU to switch sports and play football under head coach Jerry Kill, just as the program was beginning its rapid rise to the top of the

The Hill File

Birthday: April 5, 1985 (Age 39)
Hometown: Du Quoin, Illinois
Alma mater: Southern Illinois, 2008
NFL Career: Chicago Bears, Green Bay Packers
AFL Career: Rio Grande Valley Dorados, Orlando Predators, Tampa Bay Storm, San Antonio Talons
Carbondale H.S.: Head coach in 2013



Collegiate Coaching Record

Year	School	Assignment	Overall	MVFC
2014	Southern Illinois	Quarterbacks	6-6	3-5 (t-7th)
2015	Southern Illinois	OC/QBs	3-8	2-6 (9th)
2016	Southern Illinois	Head Coach	4-7	2-6 (t-8th)
2017	Southern Illinois	Head Coach	4-7	2-6 (t-8th)
2018	Southern Illinois	Head Coach	2-9	1-7 (10th)
2019	Southern Illinois	Head Coach	7-5	5-3 (t-3rd)
2020	Southern Illinois	Head Coach	6-4	3-3 (5th)
2021	Southern Illinois	Head Coach	8-5	5-3 (3rd)
2022	Southern Illinois	Head Coach	5-6	4-4 (6th)
2023	Southern Illinois	Head Coach	8-5	4-4 (7th)
2024	Southern Illinois	Head Coach		
Career Southern Illinois Head Coach			44-48	26-36

league standings.

Hill initially sat behind league Player of the Year Joel Sambursky, before taking over the starting job in 2006. In two seasons as the starter, he went 21-6 and set the school record for passing yards in 2007. He still holds the best completion percentage (68.3) in school history.

Highlights of Hill's playing career include guiding Southern to a win at Indiana in 2006, in which he passed for four touchdowns as SIU became the league's first team to defeat a Big Ten opponent. Hill capped off his career in 2007 by leading the team to the Final Four of the playoffs, where the Salukis ultimately lost a 20-17 heartbreaker to Joe Flacco and Delaware. He was also a finalist for the Peyton Award in '07.

Hill played six seasons of professional football, mostly in the Arena Football League, where he played for head coach Jay Gruden, who went on to coach NFL's Washington Redskins from 2014-2019. Hill also had brief free-agent stints with the Chicago Bears in 2008 and Green Bay Packers in 2012.

Playing for Gruden, one of the game's top offensive minds, helped shape Hill's offensive philosophy. First as Southern's offensive coordinator and now as head coach, Hill has refined his own unique style of offense that combines elements of Air Raid, spread and up-tempo.

"Coaching my alma mater is a dream come true," Hill said. "I love everything about this region and what it stands for, that blue-collar mentality. This is not my team. This is our team. Our program is going to invest in the community and make us proud on and off the field."

Hill and wife, Alicia, a former volleyball player at SIU, reside in Carbondale and have three daughters. His brother, former Saluki quarterback A.J. Hill, coaches football at Rochester (Ill.) High School.



QUICK FACTS

School Southern Illinois University
 Location Carbondale, Ill.
 Founded 1869
 Enrollment 11,359 (Fall, 2023)
 Nickname Salukis
 Colors Maroon and White
 Affiliation NCAA Division I (FCS)
 Conference Missouri Valley Football
 President Dr. Daniel F. Mahony
 Chancellor Dr. Austin A. Lane
 Director of Athletics Tim Leonard
 Football Athletic Trainer Mike Lyznicki
 Equipment Manager Matt Orbany
 Football Office Phone (618) 453-3332
 Ticket Office Phone (618) 453-2000

FACILITY INFORMATION

Stadium (Capacity) Saluki Stadium (15,000)
 First Season 2010
 Surface FieldTurf Classic HD
 Record 40-34

TEAM INFORMATION

2023 Record 8-5
 Home 4-3
 Road 4-2
 MVFC (Finish) 4-4 (7th)
 Basic Offensive Set Multiple
 Basic Defensive Set 4-3
 Offensive Starters Returning 5
 C Chase Evans, G Jake Green, RT Abdou Toure, WR Vinson Davis III,
 TE Aidan Quinn
 Defensive Starters Returning 3
 LB Colin Bohanek, S Ubayd Steed, S Iverson Brown
 Special Teams Returning Starters 1
 LS Ross Pedro

MEDIA SERVICES

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 Website SIUSalukis.com
 Twitter @SIU_Football
 Facebook Facebook.com/SalukiFootball

COACHING STAFF

Head Coach Nick Hill
 Alma Mater Southern Illinois, 2008
 Defensive Coordinator/Defensive Line Antonio James
 Alma Mater Illinois, 2009
 Offensive Coordinator/QBs Blake Rolan
 Alma Mater Louisville, 2005
 Dan Clark Offensive Line
 Nathan Frame Special Teams Coordinator, Defensive assistant
 Zach Grant Wide Receivers/Recruiting Coordinator
 Nate Griffin Tight Ends/Fullbacks
 Terry Hawthorne Cornerbacks
 Mac McLeran Linebackers
 Lee Pronschinske Safeties
 Larry Warner Running Backs
 Chris Gillespie Director of Football Operations
 Meade Smith Head Strength Coach
 Ryan McVicker Offensive Quality Control
 Michael Lindauer Graduate Assistant, Defense
 Jack Halperin Director of Player Personnel & Recruiting

PRONUNCIATIONS

Andrew Behm Bame
 Quentin Boeke Bake-EE
 Ben Bogle Bōgle
 Max Bremer Bremmer
 Joe Brumleve BRUM-levv-ee
 Vontrell Chairse Shar-EESE
 Aiden Duerig DURR-ig
 Amir Dwight UH-meer
 Noah Fenske FEN-ski
 Ben Fiegel Feegle
 Nah'shawn Hezekiah NUH-shawn
 Michael Lindauer LIND-hour
 Tae Marrero Tay Muh-RARE-oh
 Payton Mazur Mazzer
 Denym Mitchell Denim
 Cejai Parson CJ
 Cooper Phalin FAY-lin
 Lee Pronschinske pron-CHIN-ski
 Alex Robarge ROW-berge
 Ubayd Steed OOH-bade
 Abdou Toure AB-doo, TOE-ray
 Shug Walker Shoog (like sugar)



Miscellaneous Stats & Honors

Career Starts							
Player	20	21	22	23	24	Career	Cons.
Ben Bogle	—	—	—	1	—	1	—
Colin Bohanek	—	—	—	12	—	12	2
Iverson Brown	—	—	—	11	—	11	9
Vinson Davis III	—	—	—	12	—	12	2
Chase Evans	3	12	11	12	—	38	2
Jake Green	2	1	11	13	—	27	24
Derek Harden Jr.	—	—	4	12	—	19	2
Desman Hearnns	—	—	—	2	—	2	—
Aidan Logan	—	—	—	1	—	1	—
Devin Love	—	—	1	—	—	1	—
David Miller	—	10	11	—	—	21	—
Aidan Quinn	—	—	—	13	—	13	13
Ryan Schwendeman	—	—	—	4	—	4	—
Ubayd Steed	—	—	—	13	—	13	13
Abdou Toure	—	—	6	13	—	19	13

Special Teams Tackles (Career)						
Player	20	21	22	23	24	Career
Jeffery Wells, S	8	5	1	4	—	19
Shane Roth, LB	—	1	5	5	—	11
Ben Bogle	—	—	—	7	—	7
Desman Hearnns	—	—	—	7	—	7
Colton Hoag	—	—	—	5	—	5
Jamir Conn	—	—	—	4	—	4
Cejai Parson, S	—	—	3	—	—	3
Louis Wilbert, LB	—	—	3	—	—	3
Vinkevus Pierre	—	—	—	3	—	3
Chris Presto	—	—	—	3	—	3
Ross Pedro	—	—	—	2	—	2
Aidan Quinn, TE	—	1	1	—	—	2
Stephen Green	—	—	—	2	—	2
Jimmy Athans	—	—	—	2	—	2
Dev Walton	—	—	—	1	—	1
Miles Marshall	—	—	—	1	—	1

Career 100-yard Receiving Games		
Player	Times	Last Time
Vinson Davis III	1	126 at SEMO, 9/16/23

MVFC Weekly Awards	
<u>Defensive Player of The Week</u>	
David Miller, CB	at Indiana State, 11/13/21
<u>Offensive Lineman of The Week</u>	
Chase Evans, G	at Murray State, 10/14/23