

FIGHTING ILLINI

FOOTBALL



ILLINOIS FIGHTING ILLINI (1-0) vs. UTSA ROADRUNNERS (0-0)

Saturday, Sept. 4, 2021 // 6:40 p.m. CT // Big Ten Network
Champaign, Ill. // Memorial Stadium



GAME DAY INFO

TV | BIG TEN NETWORK

- » Lisa Byington (play-by-play), Anthony Herron (analyst), and Coley Harvey (sideline)

RADIO | Busey Bank Illini Sports Network

- » Brian Barnhart (play-by-play), Martin O'Donnell (analyst), 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

SOCIAL MEDIA

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

ALL-TIME SERIES vs. UTSA

Series: First meeting

Last: -

Streak: -

at Champaign: -

The First Win of the College Football Season

- Illinois was the first team to start 1-0 after beating Nebraska last week in the first of the college football game of the season and the only Power-5 vs. Power-5 game of Week 0.
- Illinois has defeated Nebraska in consecutive seasons for the first time since 1923 (W, 24-7 in Champaign) and 1924 (W, 9-6 in Lincoln).
- 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 posted a conference win in a season opener for the first time since Sept. 1, 1984 (24-16 victory over Northwestern in Champaign).
- QB Artur Sitkowski excelled in his Illini debut, entering the game late in the first quarter after QB Brandon Peters was forced to exit with an arm injury. Sitkowski - a Rutgers transfer - completed 12 of 15 passes for 124 yards and two touchdowns.
- RB Mike Epstein led the Illini rushing attack with 75 yards on 16 carries, highlighted by a 45-yard run in the first quarter.
- Illinois' first points came with a safety on a punt and the Illini also scored in the second quarter on a 41-yard fumble return touchdown by LB Calvin Hart Jr.

The 2021 Fighting Illini

- Illinois returned 82% of its total starts on offense (72/88). Only OL Kendrick Green (8 starts), WR Josh Imatorbhebhe (7), and TE Daniel Imatorbhebhe (1) departed among offensive players that started a game in 2020.
- Illinois returned 86% of its total starts on defense (76/88). Only LB Milo Eifler (5), DB Nate Hobbs (5), and DB/LB Delano Ware (2) departed among defensive players that started a game in 2020.
- Illinois returned its entire specialists unit - P Blake Hayes, K James McCourt, and LS Ethan Tabel.
- Illinois returned 131 career FBS starts on its offensive line, tied for the ninth-most in the nation: Vederian Lowe (40), Alex Palczewski (40), Doug Kramer (37), Verdis Brown (8), Julian Pearl (4), Alex Pihlstrom (2)
- One of Bielema's first tasks as head coach was to get the know the Fighting Illini roster and invite student-athletes back to Champaign. All 2020 football student-athletes were granted an extra year of eligibility by the NCAA due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - » 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 in the nation.
- Illinois returned 83% of its production according to Bill Connelly, ESPN's SP+ writer. The 83% is ranked sixth in the Big Ten and 42nd in the nation.

(Super) Seniors

- Illinois has 41 seniors, including 21 super seniors who received an extra year of eligibility 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).

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.

ILLINOIS FIGHTING ILLINI (1-0)

Aug. 28	... Nebraska	..... W, 30-22
Sept. 4	... UTSA	..... 6:40 p.m. CT (BTN)
Sept. 11	... at Virginia	..... 10 a.m. CT (ACC)
Sept. 17	... Maryland	..... 8 p.m. CT (FS1)
Sept. 25	... at Purdue	..... TBA
Oct. 2	... Charlotte	..... TBA
Oct. 9	... #12 Wisconsin	..... TBA
Oct. 23	... at #19 Penn State	..... 11 a.m. CT (TBA)
Oct. 30	... Rutgers	..... TBA
Nov. 6	... at Minnesota	..... TBA
Nov. 20	... at #18 Iowa	..... TBA
Nov. 27	... Northwestern	..... TBA
Dec. 4	... Big Ten Championship	..... 7 p.m. CT (FOX)

Rankings are AP poll

QUICK FACTS

UNIVERSITY INFORMATION

Location: Urbana-Champaign (135,000)

Founded: 1867

Enrollment: 52,331

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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TEAM NOTES

Illinois-Nebraska Notes

- DB Kerby Joseph recorded the first points of the 2021 college football season, recording a safety on a tackle following a 59-yard booming punt from Blake Hayes that backed up Nebraska's Cam Taylor-Britt to the endzone. It was Illinois' first safety since a Dawuane Smoot TFL against North Carolina on Sept. 10, 2016.
- QB Artur Sitkowski's two passing TDs equaled his career high in a game. The former Rutgers QB also threw for two TDs against Purdue last season (Nov. 28, 2020).
- WR Isaiah Williams led the Illini with six receptions for 41 yards and his first career receiving TD, a 1-yard catch in the third quarter. Williams, the converted QB, was at WR for the first time since the 2019 Redbox Bowl (Dec. 30, 2019).
- TE Luke Ford had three receptions, equaling his career total of three through his first two seasons of play. His three catches totaled 30 yards, eclipsing his previous career total of 19 receiving yards. Ford recorded his first career TD with a 2-yard reception in the third quarter.
- Deuce Spann recorded his first career stat and had the longest catch of the day, hauling in a 45-yard pass from Sitkowski at the 1-yard line in the third quarter.
- DB Tony Adams had a game-high 11 tackles, including 10 solos. It marked his sixth career game recording double-digit stops, and his most since tallying 13 tackles in last year's win at Nebraska.
- P Blake Hayes had another exceptional performance, averaging 45.3 yards on six punts, with four downed inside the 20. In addition to his 59-yarder that led to a safety, he also dropped a 50-yarder out of bounds at the 1-yard line and had a pair of fourth quarter punts fair caught at the 9-yard line and 13-yard line.
- Illinois' 48 rushing attempts were their most in a game at home since Sept. 15, 2018 vs. USF (49) and the Illini's most in a conference game at home since Oct. 27, 2012 vs. Indiana (55).
- Illinois had the ball for 34:55 in Saturday's victory over Nebraska. That is the highest time of possession by the Illini in a conference game at home since Nov. 20, 2010 vs. Northwestern (41:16).

All-Big Ten Returners

- Illinois returns 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

2021 Preseason All-Big Ten, All-America Honors

- » LB Jake Hansen » Phil Steele All-American (4th), Phil Steele All-Big Ten (1st), Athlon All-Big Ten (2nd), PFF All-Big Ten (3rd)
- » C Doug Kramer » PFF All-American (HM), PFF All-Big Ten (2nd), Athlon All-Big Ten (3rd), Phil Steele All-Big Ten (4th)
- » OLB Owen Carney Jr. » Phil Steele All-Big Ten (1st), Athlon All-Big Ten (2nd)
- » RB Chase Brown » Phil Steele All-Big Ten (2nd), Athlon All-Big Ten (4th), PFF All-Big Ten (HM)
- » P Blake Hayes » PFF All-Big Ten (2nd), Phil Steele All-Big Ten (3rd), Athlon All-Big Ten (3rd)
- » TE Daniel Barker » PFF All-Big Ten (3rd)
- » OL Alex Palczewski » Athlon All-Big Ten (3rd)
- » LS Ethan Tabel » Phil Steele All-Big Ten (3rd)
- » DB Tony Adams » Phil Steele All-Big Ten (4th)
- » OL Blake Jersaty » Phil Steele All-Big Ten (4th)
- » K James McCourt » Athlon All-Big Ten (4th)

TEAM NOTES

Transfer Impact

- Notable transfers added to the roster for 2021...
 - » WR Jafar Armstrong – Ran for 513 yards and caught 30 passes for 294 yards in three years at Notre Dame
 - » OL Jack Badovinac – Three-time All-Patriot League first team selection at Colgate
 - » LB Calvin Hart Jr. – NC State transfer had 53 tackles in 24 games
 - » RB Chase Hayden – Grad transfer from East Carolina, started his career at Arkansas for head coach Bret Bielema
 - » DB Prather Hudson – Do-it-all walk-on turned scholarship student-athlete comes from Georgia
 - » TE Max Rosenthal – Former Michigan State fullback started two games in 2019 before missing the 2020 season
 - » QB Artur Sitkowski – Started 15 games in three seasons at Rutgers, passing for 2,031 yards and eight touchdowns
 - » DB Eddie Smith – Played in 10 games in three seasons at Alabama, helping the Crimson Tide to the 2020 national title
- The Illini have had huge success in the transfer market in the past, including the following student-athletes on the current roster...
 - » RB Chase Brown – Brother of DB Sydney Brown transferred from Western Michigan and was an All-Big Ten third team selection in 2020
 - » TE Luke Ford – Former No. 1 TE recruit in the nation first committed to Bielema at Arkansas before going to Georgia, then transferring to Illinois
 - » WR Brian Hightower – Former four-star recruit is in his second season after coming from Miami (Fla.)
 - » OL Blake Jereasaty – FCS All-American sat out last season with an injury after transferring from Wofford
 - » WR Donny Navarro – Valpo transfer had a big second-half of the season in 2019 and was awarded a scholarship
 - » DL Roderick Perry II – One of the top Big Ten d-line NFL Draft prospects, grad transferred from South Carolina State in 2020
 - » QB Brandon Peters – Third-year student-athlete for the Illini after grad transferring from Michigan
 - » DB Derrick Smith – Started four games in 2020 after sitting out 2019 after transferring from Miami (Fla.)
 - » WR Khamri Thompson – Former two-sport athlete at Missouri (track) came to Illinois in 2019

Position Changes since 2020

- » WR Marquez Beason – switched from DB during spring practices
- » WR/K Caleb Griffin – switched from just a K prior to spring practices
- » TE Michael Marchese – switched from LB during spring practices
- » OLB Ben Schultz – switched from DB following spring practices
- » DB Coran Taylor – switched from QB following spring practices
- » TE Preston Engel – switched from OL during spring practices
- » WR Isaiah Williams – switched from QB for the final two spring practices
- » OLB Bryce Barnes – switched from DL during the summer
- » OLB Shammond Cooper – switched from LB at the start of fall camp
- » DL Verdis Brown – switched from OL at the start of fall camp
- » *Note: Most defensive ends switched to outside linebacker upon Bielema's arrival*

NFL Departures after 2020

- **NFL Draft** » OL Kendrick Green (Pittsburgh, 3rd round), DB Nate Hobbs (Las Vegas, 5th round)
- **NFL Free Agent Signings** » LB Milo Eifler (New York Jets), WR Josh Imatorbhebe (Jacksonville)

CAREER STARTS

PLAYER	'21	'20	'19	'18	'17	'16	TOT
Lowe, Vederian	1	8	13	12	7	--	41
Palczewski, Alex	1	4	13	12	11	--	41
Kramer, Doug	1	5	12	12	8	--	38
Hansen, Jake	1	8	9	12	--	1	31
Brown, Sydney	1	6	10	10	--	--	27
Adams, Tony	1	6	10	7	2	--	26
Barker, Daniel	1	5	8	3	--	--	17
Carney Jr., Owen	1	8	0	8	0	--	17
Peters, Brandon	1	5	11	--	--	--	17
Martin, Jartavius	1	2	5	8	--	--	16
Woods, Jamal	0	3	5	4	4	--	15
Gay, Isaiah	1	3	5	3	2	--	14
Tolson, Khalan	0	6	4	0	--	--	10
Navarro, Donny	1	3	6	--	--	--	10
Witherspoon, Devon	1	6	3	--	--	--	10
Brown, Verdis	0	8	0	--	--	--	8
Epstein, Mike	1	3	0	2	3	--	9
Hightower, Brian	--	7	--	--	--	--	7
Brown, Chase	0	6	0	0	--	--	6
Perry, Roderick	0	6	--	--	--	--	6
Marchese, Michael	0	2	0	3	0	--	5
Coleman, Seth	0	4	0	--	--	--	4
Pearl, Julian	0	4	--	--	--	--	4
Smith, Derrick	0	4	--	--	--	--	4
Williams, Isaiah	1	4	--	--	--	--	5
Newton, Jer'Zhan	1	3	--	--	--	--	4
Robinson, Matt	--	1	2	0	--	--	3
Avery, Calvin	0	2	--	--	--	--	2
Barnes, Bryce	0	2	--	--	--	--	2
Barnes, Tarique	0	1	0	--	--	--	2
Beason, Marquez	--	2	--	--	--	--	2
Ford, Luke	1	2	--	--	--	--	3
Joseph, Kerby	1	0	2	0	--	--	3
Pihlstrom, Alex	1	2	0	--	--	--	3
Campbell, Dalevon	--	1	0	--	--	--	1
Mondesir, Marc	0	1	0	0	0	--	1
Pate, Deon	0	0	0	1	--	--	1
Sandy, Carlos	0	0	0	1	--	--	1
Slaughter, Jordyn	0	1	--	--	--	--	1
Taylor, Coran	0	1	0	--	--	--	1
Jereasaty, Blake	1	--	--	--	--	--	1
Hart, Calvin	1	--	--	--	--	--	1
Randolph, Keith	1	0	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	QB	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	Joriell Washington	DB	6-2	200	Fr.	Fort Myers, Fla./Fort Myers Senior
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
23	Tahveon Nicholson	DB	5-11	175	R-Fr.	Jacksonville, Fla./Lee
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

2021 ILLINOIS FOOTBALL ROSTER

39	Aidan Hall	LS	6-2	205	R-Fr.	Glen Ellyn, Ill./Benet Academy
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
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
- » 2020 Phil Steele Preseason All-Big Ten third team
- » No. 8 graded center in the nation and No. 3 in Power-5 by PFF (79.2) in 2019
- » Missed the 2019 Redbox Bowl with an injury, snapping a streak of 27 straight starts
- » Grew up an Illini fan and attended games as a child



79 VEDERIAN LOWE

OL, 6-6, 320, SR.

ROCKFORD, ILL. / AUBURN HS

- » 34 straight starts entering the 2021 season
- » 40 career starts, eight away from tying the Illinois record
- » 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
- » Married his wife, Haylee, in February 2021



63 ALEX PALCZEWSKI

OL, 6-6, 315, SR.

MOUNT PROSPECT, ILL. / PROSPECT

- » Missed the final four games of 2020 with a knee injury
- » 40 career starts, eight away from tying the Illinois record
- » Most of his extended family lives in Poland



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	1	0
CAREER		37	33

START STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	G	START
2017	WOFF	11	5
2018	WOFF	12	12
2019	WOFF	12	12
2020	ILL	DNP	Injury
2021	ILL	1	1
CAREER		36	30

START STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	G	START
2017	ILL	8	8
2018	ILL	12	12
2019	ILL	12	12
2020	ILL	5	5
2021	ILL	1	1
CAREER		38	38

START STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	G	START
2017	ILL	8	7
2018	ILL	12	12
2019	ILL	13	13
2020	ILL	8	8
2021	ILL	1	1
CAREER		42	41

START STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	G	START
2017	ILL	12	11
2018	ILL	12	12
2019	ILL	13	13
2020	ILL	4	4
2021	ILL	1	1
CAREER		42	41

START STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	G	START
2019	ILL	1	0
2020	ILL	8	2
2021	ILL	1	1
CAREER		10	3



OFFENSIVE LINE

Veteran Offensive Line Group Returns in 2021

- The offensive line returns 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.) has switched to defensive line.
- Illinois returns 131 career FBS offensive line starts at the start of 2021, including 80 combined starts between 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' 71 career starts at tackle between its two starting tackles is the most in the country (Lowe 41, Palczewski 41 total, 30 at tackle).
- Eight Illini have started a game in their career (FBS and FCS), tied for the 10th-most in the nation entering the season
 - » Lowe – 41 (LT – 38, RT – 3)
 - » Palczewski – 41 (RT – 30, LG -7, RG – 4)
 - » Kramer – 38 (C – 38)
 - » Badovinac – 33 (All at Colgate)
 - » Jeresaty – 30 (1 at Illinois, 29 at Wofford)
 - » Brown – 8 (RG – 8)
 - » Pearl – 4 (RT – 4)
 - » Pihlstrom – 3 (LG – 3)
- 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 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, Jeff, 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.)

- » 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	1,884	6.9	18	8	24	179
2021	ILL	1	3	4	75.0	35	8.8	0	0	2	15
CAREER		28	252	469	53.7	3,028	6.5	25	11	37	

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	-	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	1	2	-15	-7.5	0	0	0	-	0
CAREER		28	117	298	2.5	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	1,158	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	1	12	15	80.0	124	8.3	2	0	1	2
CAREER		19	242	437	55.4	2,155	4.9	10	20	21	145

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	1	3	4	1.3	0	0	0	-	0
CAREER		19	47	-67	-1.4	0	0	0	-	0

Art Steps In

- **Brandon Peters** was injured in the second quarter of the season opener against Nebraska 8/28/21, forcing Illinois to go to **Artur Sitkowski**, who led the Illini the rest of the way to victory.
 - » Sitkowski tied a career high with two touchdown passes -- one to WR Isaiah Williams and one to TE Luke Ford
 - » Completed 12 of 15 attempts (80%) for 124 yards and two touchdowns



RUNNING BACKS



2 CHASE BROWN

RB, 5-11, 205, SO.

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

- » 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 his freshman season at Western Michigan
- » Played in four games and redshirted the 2019 season, his first at Illinois



26 MIKE EPSTEIN

RB, 6-0, 205, JR.

FT. LAUDERDALE, FLA. / ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

- » Fifth in the Big Ten in yards per carry (5.9)
- » Trained with NFL running back Frank Gore during the summer of 2020
- » Has missed 25 games at Illinois due to injuries (7 in 2017, 5 in 2018, 12 in 2019, 1 in 2020) and continues to fight back to play



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



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	3	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	1	5	24	4.8	0	0	0	-	0
CAREER		26	183	934	5.1	3	17	139	8.2	0

RUSHING/RECEIVING STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	G	RUSH	YDS	AVG	TD	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
2017	ILL	5	57	346	6.1	3	4	59	14.8	1
2018	ILL	7	60	411	6.9	3	10	86	8.6	0
2019	ILL	1	8	45	5.6	0	0	0	-	0
2020	ILL	7	69	367	5.3	4	2	29	14.5	0
2021	ILL	1	16	75	4.7	1	1	2	2.0	0
CAREER		21	210	1244	5.9	11	17	176	10.4	1

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	1	4	12	3.0	0	0	0	-	0
CAREER		27	150	690	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	1	12	45	3.8	0	0	0	-	0
CAREER		4	22	57	2.6	0	0	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	1	3	16	5.3	0	1	7	7.0	0
CAREER		11	25	140	5.6	0	4	17	4.3	0

Ground Game

- Illinois returned 99% of its rushing total from last year's team (1,555/1,569 rushing yards), one of the top rushing teams in the Big Ten.
- Illinois was third in the Big Ten in rushing yards (1,569) and third in rushing yards per game (196.1) in 2020.
- Illinois had three rushers combine for six 100-yard performances in 2020 and all three rushers are back in 2021: RB Chase Brown (at Rutgers, at Nebraska), QB-turned-WR Isaiah Williams (at Rutgers, at Penn State), RB Mike Epstein (Minnesota, at Nebraska).
- Illinois had multiple 100-yard rushers in back-to-back Big Ten games against Rutgers and Nebraska. It was the first time Illinois accomplished the feat since at least 1945 when complete records began.
- Illinois had three players in the Big Ten's top 11 in yards per carry in 2020.
 - » Williams was third (6.2), Epstein was 10th (5.3) Brown was 11th (5.2)

2020 BIG TEN TEAM RUSHING LEADERS (YPG)

TEAM	G	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD	YDS/G
1. Ohio State	8	345	2055	6.0	19	256.9
2. Nebraska	8	334	1611	4.8	15	201.4
3. Illinois	8	327	1569	4.8	9	196.1
4. Minnesota	7	298	1343	4.5	19	191.9
5. Penn State	9	402	1569	3.9	15	174.3
6. Iowa	8	296	1368	4.6	18	171.0
7. Wisconsin	7	293	1152	3.9	13	164.6
8. Northwestern	9	394	1465	3.7	16	162.8



WIDE RECEIVERS



7 BRIAN HIGHTOWER

WR, 6-3, 215, JR.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. / IMG ACADEMY (FLA.) / MIAMI (FLA.)

- » Transfer from Miami (Fla.) was granted immediate eligibility by the NCAA for 2020
- » Played in 11 games in regular season and made three starts as a freshman at Miami (Fla.) in 2018
- » Caught first touchdown pass of career in debut vs. LSU 9/2/18



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.

NAPERVILLE, ILL. / NEUQUA VALLEY / VALPARAISO

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



4 KHMARI THOMPSON

WR, 6-1, 210, SO.

LAWRENCEVILLE, GA. / CENTRAL GWENNETT

- » Ran track at Missouri and finished fourth in the 200-meter dash at the Mizzou Open 1/25/19, setting a personal record
- » Ran in the 4x100-meter relay at the SEC Championships 5/11/19, finishing in seventh place and contributing to a relay personal record of 40.74



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"
- » First career game at wide receiver in the season opener against Nebraska 8/28/21
- » Converted QB, set Illinois record for rushing yards by a QB in a game (195) at Rutgers in 2020
- » 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
2018	MIA-FL	11	0	0	-	0	4	60	15.0	1
2019	MIA-FL	7	0	0	-	0	8	88	11.0	0
2020	ILL	6	0	0	-	0	11	209	19.0	3
CAREER		24	0	0	-	0	23	357	15.5	4

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	1	0	0	-	0	1	21	21.0	0
CAREER		29	8	36	4.5	0	68	993	14.6	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	1	0	0	-	0	0	0	-	0
CAREER		14	0	0	-	0	6	54	9.0	1

RUSHING/RECEIVING STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	G	RUSH	YDS	AVG	TD	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
2018	MIZZ	3	0	0	-	0	0	0	-	0
2020	ILL	5	0	0	-	0	0	0	-	0
2021	ILL	1	0	0	-	0	0	0	-	0
CAREER		9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

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	1	0	0	-	0	2	13	6.5	0
CAREER		16	0	0	-	0	23	251	10.9	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	1	2	8	4.0	0	6	41	6.8	1
CAREER		11	74	413	5.6	1	9	50	5.6	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
CAREER		10	29	73	39.7	431	5.9	4	3	5	20



TIGHT ENDS



87 DANIEL BARKER

TE, 6-4, 250, JR.

FORT LAUDERDALE, FLA. / DEERFIELD BEACH

- » 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
- » Became Illinois' second true freshman tight end to start a season opener in program 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
- » 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	1	0	0	-	0	0	0	-	0
CAREER		33	0	0	-	0	46	625	13.6	7

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	1	0	0	-	0	3	30	10.0	1
CAREER		12	0	0	-	0	6	49	8.2	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	1	0	0	-	0	0	0	-	0
CAREER		32	0	0	-	0	0	0	-	0

RUSHING/RECEIVING STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	G	RUSH	YDS	AVG	TD	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
2020	ILL	1	0	0	-	0	0	0	-	0
2021	ILL	1	0	0	-	0	0	0	-	0
CAREER		2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

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	1	0	0	-	0	0	0	-	0
CAREER		21	0	0	-	1	2	4	2.0	1



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

- » 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
- » 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	1	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
CAREER		32	18	23	41	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	0	0	0	0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
CAREER		21	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
2020	ILL	8	6	17	23	1.5-11	1.5-11	0	0	1	0	0
2021	ILL	1	2	3	5	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
CAREER		9	8	20	28	1.5-11	1.5-11	0	0	1	0	0

DEFENSIVE STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	G	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	1	2	1	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
CAREER		7	7	13	20	2.5-21	2.0-20	0	1	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	1	1	1	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	1	0	0
CAREER		10	8	9	17	0.5-2	0-0	0	1	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	1	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
CAREER		29	36	20	56	13.5-38	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 IHSA 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 IHSA 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

- » 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



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

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	0	0
2020	ILL	8	0	3	3	0.5-1	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
2021	ILL	1	0	0	0	0.0-0	0.0-0	0	0	0	0	0
CAREER		22	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	1	0	3	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
CAREER		44	34	39	73	13.5-75	9.5-61	0	2	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	0	0
2020	ILL	8	7	6	13	3.5-8	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
2021	ILL	1	2	1	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
CAREER		12	9	7	16	3.5-8	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	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	1	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
CAREER		40	50	37	87	11.5-44	5.5-36	0	5	1	2	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	0	0
2019	ILL	1	0	0	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	1	0	0	0	0.0-0	0.0-0	0	0	0	0	0
CAREER		7	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0

Carney, Gay Bring Experience to the OLBs

- Illinois' outside linebacker group is led by two super seniors - Owen Carney Jr. and Isaiah Gay. 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.
- Carney was fourth in the Big Ten in sacks (5.0) and 13th in TFLs (7.0) in 2020, earning an All-Big Ten second team selection by the coaches and media. He also received second-team honors by the Associated Press in 2020.
- Gay has played in 40 games in five seasons for the Illini. He was the third-youngest player in FBS to start a game during his freshman season.



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
- » 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)
- » Leads the nation in takeaways over the last two seasons (14)
- » 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
- » Owns his own clothing business called "One of the Few" (Instagram: _oneofthefew)
- » 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	1	2	0	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
CAREER		19	22	18	40	1.5-10	1.0-9	1	1	1	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	1	0	5	5	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
CAREER		42	127	121	248	26.0-87	7.0-45	3	6	10	6	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	4	0-0	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	1	0	0	0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
CAREER		26	6	4	10	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	1	0	0	0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
CAREER		31	41	41	82	7.5-25	1.5-11	0	4	2	2	0

Hansen Back to Lead 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 last two seasons (14).
- Hansen is the only current FBS player with 200 tackles, 25 tackles for loss and 10 forced fumbles.
- Hansen is one of only six FBS players with 200+ tackles, 25+ TFLs, 10+ forced fumbles and 3+ interceptions since 2000.
- Hansen is the active FBS leader in forced fumbles (10). He has nine forced fumbles over his last 17 games played.
- Hansen's 10 career forced fumbles are tied for third-most in program history, behind only Illinois legends Simeon Rice (13) and Whitney Mercilus (11).
- Hansen ranks 14th among active FBS players in career tackles (243).
- 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.



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

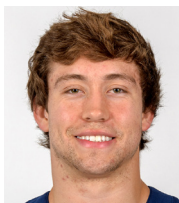


30 SYDNEY BROWN

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

- » 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	1	10	1	11	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
CAREER		30	97	55	152	7.5-17	2.0-2	5	11	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	6	4	3	7	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
CAREER		43	14	8	22	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	1	6	3	9	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
CAREER		28	102	86	188	5.0-9	0-0	4	10	1	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	0	0	0	0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
CAREER		53	7	1	8	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	1	3	0	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
CAREER		28	36	25	61	1.0-2	0-0	0	4	0	0	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	1	0	0	0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
CAREER		2	0	0	0	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 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	1	2	3	5	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
CAREER		31	66	42	108	3.5-10	0-0	3	8	1	2	0

DEFENSIVE STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	GP	UA	A	TOT	TFL-YD	SACKS-YD	INT	PD	FF	FR	BLK
2021	ILL	1	0	0	0	0-0	0-0	0	2	0	0	0
CAREER		1	0	0	0	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	1	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
CAREER		34	31	16	47	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	1	0	0	0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
CAREER		11	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	1	0	0	0	0.0-0	0.0-0	0	0	0	0	0
CAREER		33	9	9	18	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	1	4	0	4	0-0	0-0	0	4	0	0	0
CAREER		21	46	24	70	1.0-4	0-0	2	8	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
- » Has broken or on pace to break nearly every Illinois punting record (details below)
- » 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
- » 39-yard field goal as time expired beat No. 6 Wisconsin 10/19/19 to finish the largest upset over a ranked team in Big Ten history
- » 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	1	6	272	59	45.3	0	3	3	2	0
CAREER		46	264	11479	70	43.5	10	55	94	57	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	4-4	0-1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-1	4	0
CAREER		61-62	19-30	6-6	5-8	4-8	4-8	118	57

GAMES PLAYED STATISTICS

YEAR	TEAM	G
2017	ILL	11
2018	ILL	12
2019	ILL	13
2020	ILL	8
2021	ILL	1
CAREER		45

One of the Top Special Teams Units in the Nation Returns

- 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**.
- Senior K **James 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
- Senior P **Blake Hayes** will own nearly every punting record in Illinois history by the time he leaves Champaign.
 - » Career ranks: punting average (2nd, 43.48), total punts (1st, 264), punt yards (1st, 11,479), punts inside the 20 (1st, 95)
 - » Season ranks: punting average (3rd, 6th, 7th), punting average (1st, 5th), fewest touchbacks (1st, 2nd, 2nd, 8th), lowest touchback percentage (1st, 2nd, 2nd), punts inside the 20 (1st, 3rd, 4th), punts inside the 20 percentage (1st, 3rd, 5th, 9th), 50+ yard punts (1st, 8th, 10th)

ILLINOIS RECORDS

CAREER PUNTING AVERAGE

1. Steve Weatherford, 2002-05 . . . 43.53 (193-8,402)
2. **Blake Hayes, 2017-21 43.48 (264-11,479)**
3. Steve Fitts, 1998-2001 41.68

SEASON PUNTS INSIDE THE 20 PERCENTAGE

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

CAREER 50+ YARD FIELD GOALS

1. Chase McLaughlin, 2014-18 5
2. **James McCourt, 2019-21 4**
Jason Reda, 2004-07 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

Tony Adams Communication (Second Bachelor's)
Lucas Althaus Agribusiness Markets and Management
Jafar Armstrong Recreation, Sport, and Tourism (Second Bachelor's)
Calvin Hart Sociology
Jack Badovinac Strategic Brand Communication (Master's)
Daniel Barker Communication
Zachary Barlev Mathematics
Bryce Barnes Community Health
Tarique Barnes Advertising
Keion Battle Chemistry
Marques Beason Recreation, Sport, and Tourism
Christian Bobak Technology Management (Master's)
Matt Bobak Community Health
Chase Brown Communication
Sydney Brown Recreation, Sport, and Tourism
Verdis Brown African American Studies
Pat Bryant Recreation, Sport, and Tourism
Dalevon Campbell Advertising
Owen Carney Jr. Recreation, Sport, and Tourism (Master's)
Michael Cerniglia Recreation, Sport, and Tourism
Sean Coughlan Accountancy (Master's)
Seth Coleman Recreation, Sport, and Tourism
Samari Collier General Studies
Shammond Cooper Recreation, Sport, and Tourism
Thomas Cronin History
Kionte Curry General Studies
Desmond Dan Jr. Recreation, Sport, and Tourism (Master's)
Isaac Darkangelo Communication
Daniel Edwards General Studies
Preston Engel Recreation, Sport, and Tourism
Mike Epstein Strategic Brand Communication (Master's)
Nick Fedanzo Communication
Luke Ford Recreation, Sport, and Tourism
Isaiah Gay Learning and Education Studies
Josh Gesky General Studies
Prince Green General Studies
Caleb Griffin Management (Master's)
Devin Hale General Studies

Aidan Hall Systems Engineering and Design
Jake Hansen Recreation, Sport, and Tourism (Master's)
Lane Hansen Kinesiology
Calvin Hart General Studies
Chase Hayden Strategic Brand Communication (Master's)
Blake Hayes Public Health (Master's)
Owen Hickey General Studies
Brian Hightower Recreation, Sport, and Tourism
Ezekiel Holmes Sociology
Prather Hudson Recreation, Sport, and Tourism (Master's)
Blake Jerasaty Finance (Master's)
DJ Johnson Food Science and Human Nutrition
Ryan Johnson Strategic Brand Communication (Master's)
Jaden Jones-Watkins Communication
Kerby Joseph Community Health
Evan Kirts Recreation, Sport, and Tourism
Doug Kramer Recreation, Sport, and Tourism (Master's)
Josh Kreutz General Studies
Tailon Leitzsey Communication (Second Bachelor's)
Ty Lindenman Agriculture and Consumer Economics
Reggie Love General Studies
Vederian Lowe Communication
Mike Manning Psychology
Michael Marchese Management (Master's)
Jartavius Martin Communication
Sed McConnell General Studies
James McCourt Management (Master's)
Josh McCray General Studies
Alec McEachern Technology Management (Master's)
Ryan Meed Kinesiology
Griffin Moore Recreation, Sport, and Tourism
Donny Navarro Technology Management (Master's)
Jer'Zhan Newton General Studies
Tahveen Nicholson General Studies
Jakari Norwood Recreation, Sport, and Tourism
Kenenna Odeluga Business
Moses Okpala Psychology
Alex Palczewski Kinesiology

Deon Pate Sociology
Julian Pearl Sociology
Roderick Perry Recreation, Sport, and Tourism (Master's)
Brandon Peters Strategic Brand Communication (Master's)
Alex Pihlstrom Strategic Brand Communication (Master's)
Josh Plohr Recreation, Sport, and Tourism
Mako Rajkovic General Studies
Keith Randolph Jr. Recreation, Sport, and Tourism
Tip Reiman Kinesiology
Hugh Robertson Finance
Matt Robinson Recreation, Sport, and Tourism
Max Rosenthal Strategic Brand Communication (Master's)
Dylan Rosiek Kinesiology
Carlos Sandy Communication
Ben Schultz Agribusiness Markets and Management
Miles Scott Kinesiology
Artur Sitkowski Communication
Jordyn Slaughter Sociology
Derrick Smith Communication
Eddie Smith Recreation, Sport, and Tourism (Master's)
Kendall Smith Learning and Education Studies
DD Snyder General Studies
Deuce Spann Recreation, Sport, and Tourism
Tyler Strain General Studies
Ethan Tabel Germanic Studies (Second Bachelor's)
Coran Taylor Communication
Khari Thompson Recreation, Sport, and Tourism
Khalan Tolson Communication
Kalen Villanueva General Studies
Peyton Vining Recreation, Sport, and Tourism (Master's)
Casey Washington Recreation, Sport, and Tourism
Joriell Washington Community Health
Isaiah Williams Recreation, Sport, and Tourism
Brody Wisecarver General Studies
Devon Witherspoon Communication
Jamal Woods Community Health
Terry Zapf Economics
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

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

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.

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	1-0 (1.000)	

TOTAL: 12 YEARS OVERALL: 98-58 (.628) BIG TEN: 38-19 (.667)



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. UTSA

First meeting

The Illinois-UTSA Series

- This will be the first meeting between Illinois and UTSA.

UTSA Connections

- UTSA associate head coach/offensive coordinator/quarterbacks coach **Barry Lunney Jr.** was on **Bret Bielema's** staff at Arkansas as the tight ends coach and special teams coordinator.

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 (2020)

TEAM RANKINGS (130 teams ranked)

CATEGORY	NCAA	B1G	STAT
3rd Down Conversion Pct	79th	6th	0.381
3rd Down Conversion Pct Defense	89th	12th	0.430
4th Down Conversion Pct	95th	11th	.467
4th Down Conversion Pct Defense	110th	14th	0.684
Completion Percentage	122nd	14th	0.469
Defensive Touchdowns	40th	3rd	1
Fewest Penalties	32nd	6th	.39
Fewest Penalties Per Game	24th	5th	4.88
Fewest Penalty Yards	52nd	10th	406
Fewest Penalty Yards Per Game	59th	7th	50.75
First Downs Defense	68th	13th	196
First Downs Offense	92nd	9th	143
Fumbles Lost	49th	7th	.5
Fumbles Recovered	25th	3rd	.8
Kickoff Return Defense	91st	12th	22.86
Kickoff Returns	107th	11th	17.48
Net Punting	34th	5th	40.14
Passes Had Intercepted	17th	1st	.4
Passing Offense	114th	14th	152.9
Passing Yards Allowed	67th	8th	237.1
Passing Yards per Completion	32nd	2nd	13.44
Punt Return Defense	90th	10th	9.29
Punt Returns	55th	6th	8.00
Red Zone Defense	92nd	11th	.868
Red Zone Offense	119th	14th	0.692
Rushing Defense	116th	14th	230.1
Rushing Offense	35th	3rd	196.1
Sacks Allowed	44th	7th	1.88
Scoring Defense	97th	13th	34.9
Scoring Offense	111th	13th	20.1
Tackles for Loss Allowed	33rd	3rd	5.12
Team Passing Efficiency	110th	14th	112.75
Team Passing Efficiency Defense	123rd	14th	165.30
Team Sacks	61st	7th	2.25
Team Tackles for Loss	75th	9th	5.8
Time of Possession	110th	11th	27:26
Total Defense	114th	14th	467.2
Total Offense	98th	11th	349.0
Turnover Margin	19th	4th	0.75
Turnovers Gained	47th	6th	.15
Turnovers Lost	24th	4th	.9
Winning Percentage	106th	14th	0.250

NCAA INDIVIDUAL RANKINGS (Top-75)

CATEGORY	PLAYER	STAT	RANK
Field Goals Per Game	McCourt	1	63rd
Forced Fumbles	Tolson	0.29	42nd
	Hansen	0.29	55th
Fumbles Recovered	Witherspoon	3	3rd
	Hansen	2	12th
Punting	Hayes	43.8	27th
Rush Yards Per Carry	Williams	6.17	22nd
	C. Brown	5.19	63rd
Sacks	Carney Jr.	0.62	63rd
Total Interceptions	Hansen	2	67th
	Witherspoon	2	67th
Total Tackles	Hansen	8.5	59th
	Adams	8.5	59th

BIG TEN INDIVIDUAL RANKINGS (2020)

CATEGORY	PLAYER	STAT	RANK
Field Goal Percentage	McCourt	.600	9th
Field Goals Per Game	McCourt	1.00	6th
Forced Fumbles	Tolson	0.29	5th
	Hansen	0.25	8th
Fumbles Recovered	Witherspoon	3	2nd
	Hansen	2	5th
Interceptions Per Game	Witherspoon	0.3	10th
Punting	Hayes	43.8	4th
Rush Yards Per Carry	Williams	6.17	3rd
	C. Brown	5.19	8th
Rushing TDs	Epstein	4	10th
Rushing Yards	Williams	540	5th
Rusing Yards Per Game	C. Brown	67.5	9th
Sacks	Carney Jr.	0.62	7th
Total Interceptions	Hansen	2	8th
	Witherspoon	2	8th
Total Tackles	Adams	8.5	10th
	Hansen	8.5	10th

2021 PRESEASON AP TOP 25

Rk	Last	Team	Conf.	W-L	Pts.	Poll	Coaches
1	< 1	Alabama (47)	SEC	0-0	1548	*1	
2	< 6	Oklahoma (6)	Big 12	0-0	1462	*3	
3	< 3	Clemson (6)	ACC	0-0	1447	2	
4	< 2	Ohio State (1)	Big Ten	0-0	1393	4	
5	< 7	Georgia (3)	SEC	0-0	1364	5	
6	< 4	Texas A&M	SEC	0-0	1223	6	
7	< 9	Iowa State	Big 12	0-0	1160	8	
8	< 8	Cincinnati	AAC	0-0	1014	10	
9	< 5	Notre Dame	ACC	0-0	1009	7	
10	< 18	North Carolina	ACC	0-0	999	9	
11	< NR	Oregon	Pac-12	0-0	968	12	
12	< NR	Wisconsin	Big Ten	0-0	743	15	
13	< 13	Florida	SEC	0-0	728	11	
14	< 22	Miami (FL)	ACC	0-0	663	16	
15	< 21	USC	Pac-12	0-0	660	14	
16	< NR	LSU	SEC	0-0	631	13	
17	< 12	Indiana	Big Ten	0-0	549	17	
18	< 16	Iowa	Big Ten	0-0	513	18	
19	< NR	Penn State	Big Ten	0-0	456	20	
20	< NR	Washington	Pac-12	0-0	449	21	
21	< 19	Texas	Big 12	0-0	350	19	
22	< 14	Coastal Carolina	Sun Belt	0-0	232	24	
23	< 15	Louisiana	Sun Belt	0-0	208	23	
24	< NR	Utah	Pac-12	0-0	176	RV	
25	< NR	Arizona State	Pac-12	0-0	125	RV	

2021 BIG TEN STANDINGS

WEST DIVISION	BIG TEN		OVERALL		PF	PA
	W	L	W	L		
Illinois	1	0	1	0	30	22
Iowa	0	0	0	0	0	0
Minnesota	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northwestern	0	0	0	0	0	0
Purdue	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wisconsin	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nebraska	0	1	3	5	22	30
EAST DIVISION	W	L	W	L	PF	PA
Indiana	0	0	0	0	0	0
Maryland	0	0	0	0	0	0
Michigan	0	0	0	0	0	0
Michigan State	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ohio State	0	0	0	0	0	0
Penn State	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rutgers	0	0	0	0	0	0

2021 ILLINOIS BIG PLAYS

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

Player	Run	Pass	Rec	Def	ST	Tot
Epstein	1	0	1	0	0	1
Hart	0	0	0	1	0	1
Sitkowski	0	1	0	0	0	1
Spann	0	0	1	0	0	0
TOTAL	1	1	1	1	0	3

NEBRASKA (3)

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

ILLINOIS SCORING DRIVES

NEBRASKA

1st	4:07	SAF	Joseph, Kerby 0 yd punt	6-3 3:42
2nd	02:51	TD	Epstein, Mike 1 yd run (McCourt, James kick)	11-75 6:24
2nd	00:37	TD	Hart, Calvin 41 yd fumble recovery: (McCourt, James kick)	3-2 0:21
3rd	06:56	TD	Ford, Luke 2 yd pass from Sitkowski (McCourt, James kick)	14-75 8:04
3rd	04:01	TD	Williams, Isaiah 1 yd pass from Sitkowski (McCourt, James kick)	3-47 1:10

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

GAME-BY-GAME STARTERS
OFFENSIVE STARTERS

GAME	T	G	C	G	T	QB	RB	WR	WR	TE	TE
Nebraska	Lowe	Jeresaty	Kramer	Pihlstrom	Palczewski	Peters	Epstein	Williams	Navarro	Ford	Barker
<i>Consecutive</i>	<i>34</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>34</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Career</i>	<i>41</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>34</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>41</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>17</i>

DEFENSIVE STARTERS

GAME	OLB	DT	DT	OLB	LB	LB	CB	CB	S	S	S
Nebraska	Carney Jr.	Newton	Randolph	Gay	Hansen	Hart	Adams	Witherspoon	S. Brown	Martin	Joseph
<i>Consecutive</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Career</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>3</i>

2021 STARTERS BY POSITION

OFFENSE

Pos.	#	Player	Starts
QB	18	Brandon Peters	1
RB	26	Mike Epstein	1
WR	1	Isaiah Williams	1
	86	Donny Navarro	1
TE	87	Daniel Barker	1
	82	Luke Ford	1
OL	79	Vederian Lowe	1
	65	Doug Kramer	1
	63	Alex Palczewski	1
	75	Alex Pihlstrom	1
	55	Blake Jeresaty	1

DEFENSE

Pos.	#	Player	Starts
OLB	99	Owen Carney	1
	92	Isaiah Gay	1
DT	94	Jer'Zhan Newton	1
	88	Keith Randolph	1
LB	35	Jake Hansen	1
	5	Calvin Hart	1
CB	31	Devin Witherspoon	1
	6	Tony Adams	1
S	30	Sydney Brown	1
	21	Jartavius Martin	1
	25	Kerby Joseph	1

SPECIAL TEAMS

Pos.	#	Player	Starts
K	17	James McCourt	1
P	14	Blake Hayes	1
LS	56	Ethan Tabel	1

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	crew-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	56, at Penn State (21-56), 12/19/2020
0 points in 2nd half:	at Penn State (21-56), 12/19/2020	Rutgers, 11/2/2019
Allowed 0 points:	Western Illinois (44-0), 9/12/2015	Iowa (63-0), 11/17/2018
Did not score a touchdown:	vs. Iowa (0-63), 11/17/2018	Akron, (3-42) 8/31/2019
400 rushing yards:	430 vs. Minnesota, 11/3/2018	411, at Northwestern, 12/12/2020
300 rushing yards:	341 at Rutgers, 11/14/2020	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:	14 vs. Northwestern 11/30/2019	
Fewer than 50 yards rushing:		83, Purdue, 10/31/2020
Fewer than 20 yards rushing:		10, UConn, 9/7/2019
Negative yards net rushing:	-27 vs. Arizona, 9/18/1993	10, UConn, 9/7/2019
One first down:		-10, Murray State, 9/3/2016
Zero first downs:		Missouri, 9/10/1994
400 passing yards:	450 vs. Purdue, 10/4/2014	Michigan, 10/27/1934
300 passing yards:	369 at Michigan State, 11/9/2019	411, USF, 9/15/2018
Fewer than 100 passing yards:	87 at Wisconsin, 10/23/2020	327, at Penn State, 12/19/2020
4 TD catches by tight ends:	4 vs. Miami (Ohio), 9/28/2013	82, at Northwestern 12/12/2020
700 total net yards:	723 vs. Illinois-Normal, 9/16/1944	
600 total net yards:	646 vs. Minnesota, 11/3/2018	712, Maryland, 10/27/2018
500 total net yards:	509 at Nebraska, 11/10/2018	674, vs. Nebraska, 9/21/2019
400 total net yards:	490 at Nebraska, 11/21/2020	580, at Penn State, 12/19/2020
Fewer than 250 total net yards:		
Fewer than 100 total net yards:	78 at Wisconsin, 10/8/1977	192, Akron, 8/31/2019
9+ sacks in a game:	9 at Purdue, 11/3/2001	96, South Dakota State, 9/10/2011
6+ sacks in a game:	6 vs. Akron, 8/31/2019	
No sacks allowed:	at Northwestern, 12/12/2020	
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 Northwestern, 12/12/2020	
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. Arkansas State, 9/3/2011	
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
Rushing		
250 yards rushing:	330, Mikel Leshoure vs. Northwestern, 11/20/2010	256, Jordan Canzeri, Iowa, 10/10/2015
200 yards rushing:	213, Reggie Corbin vs. Minnesota, 11/3/2018	224, Mohamed Ibrahim, Minnesota, 11/7/2020
150 yards rushing:	192, Williams at Rutgers, 11/14/2020	224, Mohamed Ibrahim, Minnesota, 11/7/2020
Back-to-back 175-yard rushing games:	Rashard Mendenhall (189 vs. Ball State, 10/27/2007 & 201 at Minnesota, 11/3/2007)	
Three consecutive 100-yard rushing games:	Reggie Corbin, 10/20/2018-11/3/2018 (3 games)	
Five consecutive 100-yard rushing games:	Mikel Leshoure, 11/6/2010-12/29/2010 (5 games)	
Two rushers with 175 yards:	Harvey (215), Havard (175) vs. Middle Tennessee, 9/12/1998	
Two rushers with 100 yards:	Epstein (113) and C. Brown. (110) at Nebraska, 11/21/2020	
80+ yard rushing play:	80, Reggie Corbin at Wisconsin, 10/20/2018	
75+ yard rushing play:	77, Reggie Corbin vs. Minnesota, 11/3/2018 (3rd quarter)	79, Justin Jackson, vs. Northwestern, 11/25/17
Two 40+ runs in one quarter:	56 and 56 (2nd), Kendrick Foster vs. Murray State, 9/3/2016	Carlos Hyde (51, 55 in 4th), Ohio State, 11/16/2013
True-freshman rushed for 100 yards:	Mike Epstein, 111 vs. Western Kentucky, 9/9/2017	
True-freshman rushed for 100 yards in first career game:	E.B. Halsey, 139 vs. Missouri, 8/30/2003	
40 rushing attempts:	40, Antoineo Harris at Wisconsin, 11/9/2002	
30 rushing attempts:	31, Williams at Rutgers, 11/14/2020	
Two rushers with 2 TDs:	Corbin (2) & Bush, Jr. (2) vs. Minnesota, 11/3/2018	
8 TDs rushing:	Howard Griffith (8) vs. Southern Illinois, 9/22/1990	
4 TDs rushing:	Antoineo Harris (4) vs. Indiana, 10/27/2002	
3 TDs rushing:	A.J. Bush, Jr. (3) at Nebraska, 11/10/2018	
2+ TDs rushing by a QB:	A.J. Bush, Jr. (3) at Nebraska, 11/10/2018	
Receiving		
200 yards receiving:	200, Mike Dudek vs. Purdue, 10/4/2014	246, Roy Roundtree, Michigan, 11/6/2010
150 yards receiving:	178, Josh Imatorbhebhe at Michigan State, 11/9/2019	189, Jahan Dotson, Penn State, 12/19/2020
100 yards receiving:	178, Josh Imatorbhebhe at Michigan State, 11/9/2019	189, Jahan Dotson, Penn State, 12/19/2020
Two 100-yard receivers:	Turner (164) and Hardee (125) at Northwestern, 11/26/2016	David Bell (122), Milton Wright (100), Purdue, 10/31/2020
Running back with 100+ yards receiving:	100, Josh Ferguson vs. Northwestern, 10/27/2015	
70+ yard pass play:	83, Josh Imatorbhebhe from Brandon Peters at Michigan State, 11/9/2019	75, Penn State (Sean Clifford to Jahan Dotson), 12/19/2020
60+ yard pass play:	83, Josh Imatorbhebhe from Brandon Peters at Michigan State, 11/9/2019	
50+ yard pass play:	52, Josh Imatorbhebhe from Coran Taylor vs Minnesota, 11/7/2020	75, Penn State (Sean Clifford to Jahan Dotson), 12/19/2020
10+ receptions:	11, Malik Turner at Northwestern, 11/26/2016	
Two receivers with 2 TDs:	Will Judson and Chris Duvall vs. Missouri, 8/30/2008	
Three receiving TDs:	A.J. Jenkins (3) vs. Northwestern, 10/1/2011	
Offensive lineman caught a pass:	Jeff Allen, (1 rec., 2 yds) vs. Southern Illinois, 9/11/2010	
Offensive lineman scored a TD:	Corey Lewis, fumble recovery in end zone at Indiana, 11/9/2013	
Passing		
600 yards passing:	621, Dave Wilson at Ohio State, 11/8/1980	
500 yards passing:	621, Dave Wilson at Ohio State, 11/8/1980	
400 yards passing:	456, Wes Lunt vs. Western Kentucky, 9/6/2014	408, Scott Rislov, San Jose State, 9/21/2002
300 yards passing:	369, Brandon Peters. at Michigan State, 11/9/2019	371, Aidan O'Connell, Purdue, 10/31/2020
Consecutive 300-yard passing games:	N. Scheelhaase at Penn State (321, 11/2/2013) and at Indiana (450, 11/9/2013)	
Three consecutive 300-yard passing games:	Jason Verduzco vs East Carolina (352, 8/31/1991), at Missouri (431, 9/14/1991) and vs. Houston (341, 9/21/1991)	
6 TDs passing:	Dave Wilson at Ohio State, 11/8/1980	
5 TDs passing:	Nathan Scheelhaase (5) vs. Miami (Ohio), 9/28/2013	
4 TDs passing:	Brandon Peters (4) at UConn, 9/7/2019	
3 TDs passing:	Brandon Peters (3) at Michigan State, 11/9/2019	
Two 65-plus yard TD passes in the same game:	N. Scheelhaase, 77 & 67 yds to A.J. Jenkins at Indiana, 10/8/11	
10+ consecutive completions in a game:	Brandon Peters (10) at UConn, 9/7/2019	
Non-QB with passing TD:	Trenard Davis (WR) vs. Penn State, 9/21/2018	

THE LAST TIME (INDIVIDUAL)

	Illinois	Opponent
Defense		
20 Tackles:	J Leman (20) vs. Missouri, 9/1/2007	
19 Tackles:	Clayton Fejedelem (19) vs. Wisconsin, 10/24/2015	
4 interceptions:	Mike Gow (4) vs. Stanford, 9/21/1974	
3 interceptions:	Eugene Wilson (3) vs. Penn State, 11/10/2001	
2 interceptions:	Sydney Brown (2) vs. Michigan State, 11/9/2019	
3+ sacks in a game:	Owen Carney, Jr. (3.0) vs. Purdue, 10/31/2020	
5+ TFLs in a game:	Jake Hansen (6.0) vs. Kent State, 9/1/2018	
4+ TFLs in a game:	Jamal Milan (4.0) at Purdue, 10/26/2019	
4+ PBUs in a game:	Jaylen Dunlap (4) vs. Michigan State, 11/5/2016	
3+ PBUs in a game:	Jaylen Dunlap (4) vs. Michigan State, 11/5/2016	
3+ PBUs in back-to-back games:	Jaylen Dunlap vs. Minnesota (3) and Michigan State (4), 10/29/16-11/5/16	
Interception by a lineman:	Michael Buchanan vs. Western Michigan, 9/1/2012	
Interception return for TD:	Sydney Brown (76 yards) at Michigan State, 11/9/2019	Tyler Coyle (52 yards), at UConn, 9/7/2019
Two players with interception returns for TD in a game:	Pat Nixon-Youman (68 yards), Jonathan Brown (66 yards) vs. Indiana, 10/23/2010	
Fumble recovery for TD:	Tarique Barnes (39 yards) at Wisconsin, 10/23/2020	Grant Marvin (4 yards), Purdue, 10/31/2020
Safety:	Smoot TFL vs. North Carolina 9/10/2016	Team (tackle in end zone), Minnesota, 10/29/2016
Defensive extra point:	Nate Hobbs (75 yards) at USF, 9/15/2017	
Total Offense/All-Purpose		
500 yards total offense:	503, Juice Williams vs. Minnesota, 10/11/2008	
400 yards total offense:	439, Wes Lunt vs. Western Kentucky, 9/6/2014	
300 yards passing and 100 yards rushing:	431 (310-121), Juice Williams at Michigan, 10/4/2008	
300 all-purpose yards:	328, A.J. Jenkins vs. Northwestern, 10/1/2011	
200 all-purpose yards:	213, Reggie Corbin vs. Minnesota, 11/3/2018	
4 total TDs:	Brandon Peters (4 pass) at UConn, 9/7/2019	
2 TDs in 1 minute:	Ke'Shawn Vaughn at Purdue (3rd quarter), 11/7/2015	
Special Teams		
5 field goals:	Doug Higgins vs. Michigan State, 10/20/1990	
4 field goals:	Chase McLaughlin (4) at Maryland 10/27/2018	Keith Duncan, Iowa 11/23/2019
3 field goals:	James McCourt (3) at Rutgers, 11/14/2020	
Made 50+ yard field goal:	James McCourt (50) vs. Northwestern 11/30/2019	
Three 50+ yard field goals:	--	Tim Douglas (51, 58, 51), Iowa, 9/26/1998
Blocked a punt:	Dawson DeGroot vs. Western Illinois, 9/8/2018	
Blocked punt for a touchdown:	Dawson DeGroot (block), Stanley Green (TD) vs. Western Illinois, 9/8/2018	A.J. Epenesa (19 yards), Iowa, 11/17/2018
Blocked two field goals:	Terrell Washington vs. NIU, 9/8/2001	
Blocked two PATs:	Rob Bain at Penn State, 10/31/2015	
Blocked a field goal:	Isaiah Gay at USF, 9/15/2017	
Blocked a PAT:	Calvin Avery vs. Nebraska, 9/21/2019	
Punt return for TD:	V'Angelo Bentley (67 yards) vs. OSU, 11/16/2013	K. Groenewed (61 yards), Iowa, 11/17/2018
Kickoff return for TD:	V'Angelo Bentley (100 yards) vs. Southern Illinois, 8/31/2013	L. Wade (100 yards), Penn State, 12/19/2020
Blocked FG returned for TD:	Travis Williams (66 yards) vs. Illinois State, 9/6/2003	
Two-point conversion:	Dre Brown run vs. Michigan, 10/12/2019	
Two two-point conversions in the same game:	2 at Ohio State, 11/3/2012 (Russell pass to LaCosse; Russell rush)	

GAME SUMMARIES

GAME 1

ILLINOIS 30
NEBRASKA 22

AUG. 28, 2021

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

SCORING BY QUARTER

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

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-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.