

FOR RELEASE
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Pioneer Football League Announces 2023 Preseason All-PFL Team

ST. LOUIS, Mo. – The Pioneer Football League named 30 student-athletes to its Preseason All-Pioneer Football League Team Tuesday, including 12 returning First Team All-PFL selections.

Returning players named to the league's 2022 All-PFL Teams were placed automatically on the 2023 Preseason All-PFL team, in order of head coaches voting.

Four of the PFL's five major award winners from 2022 return for the 2023 season, led by reigning PFL Offensive Player of the Year quarterback Bret Bushka of Butler. He is joined on the preseason team by Butler's punter and kicker Luka Zurak returns after claiming PFL Special Teams Player of the Year last season. Drake defensive lineman Finn Claypool also earned a Preseason All-PFL nod after earning Freshman Defensive Player of the Year recognition in 2022. Stetson quarterback Brady Meitz also returns after claiming Freshman Offensive Player of the Year honors but was not selected to the Preseason All-PFL squad.

Defending PFL Champion St. Thomas claimed six preseason selections, with returning First Team All-PFL selections in wide receiver Andrew McElroy and linebacker Jonathan Bunce leading the group. Also notching a Preseason All-PFL spot for the Tommies are running back Shawn Shipman, offensive lineman Alec Rasmussen, defensive back Yusef Leak, and McElroy with a second nod at return specialist.

Dayton had four student-athletes named to the Preseason All-PFL team. Butler, Davidson, Drake, and San Diego had three honorees each. Marist, Morehead State, and Valparaiso saw two student-athletes named to the Preseason All-PFL squad, while Stetson and Presbyterian grabbed one preseason selection each.

The upcoming 2022 season marks the 31st year of the Pioneer Football League. The league will feature 11 teams each playing an eight-game schedule to determine the league champion and recipient of the automatic bid to the NCAA FCS Championship.

The 2023 schedule gets underway Thursday, August 31, with Morehead State hosting West Virginia State before Valparaiso meets Youngstown State. The 2023 PFL race starts in Week 3 (Sept. 16) when Davidson travels to Marist.

About the Pioneer Football League

The Pioneer Football League is the only non-scholarship, football-only NCAA Football Championship Subdivision conference. The PFL is a truly national conference with members on each coast and throughout the nation's heartland. Butler University, the University of Dayton, Drake University, and Valparaiso University were among the league's founding members in 1993, with Davidson College, Marist College, Morehead State University, Presbyterian College, the University of San Diego, the University of St. Thomas, and Stetson University joining to form the current 11-team league.

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2023 Preseason All-Pioneer Football League Team

(as selected by PFL head coaches)

| Pos. | Player | School | Ht. | Wt. | Yr. | Hometown |
|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------|------|-----|-------|----------------------|
| OFFENSE | | | | | | |
| WR | Solomon Davis (1) | Valparaiso | 6-1 | 180 | RSr. | Brighton, Tenn. |
| WR | Dominic Kibby (2) | Presbyterian | 6-1 | 175 | So. | Catsonville, Md. |
| WR | Andrew McElroy (1) | St. Thomas | 6-3 | 184 | Jr. | Bolingbrook, Ill. |
| QB | Bret Bushka (1, PotY) | Butler | 5-9 | 200 | RSr. | Lombard, Ill. |
| RB | James Louis (2) | Morehead State | 5-8 | 185 | Jr. | Hillside, N.J. |
| RB | Shawn Shipman (2) | St. Thomas | 6-0 | 204 | Jr. | Brooklyn Park, Minn. |
| FB | Eli Stewart (H) | Drake | 6-2 | 228 | Sr. | Blue Springs, Mo. |
| A-P | Re-al Mitchell (1) | San Diego | 6-0 | 210 | RSr. | Eastvale, Calif. |
| TE | Evan Jernegan (H) | Valparaiso | 6-1 | 225 | RSo. | Altadena, Calif. |
| OL | Gilbert Deglau (2) | Davidson | 6-5 | 285 | Sr. | Richmond, Va. |
| OL | Beck Kipperman (2) | Davidson | 6-3 | 270 | Sr. | Round Rock, Texas |
| OL | Alec Rasmussen (2) | St. Thomas | 6-7 | 299 | Jr. | Wayzata, Minn. |
| OL | Jimmy Poremba (2) | Drake | 6-3 | 290 | Grad. | Wildwood, Ill. |
| OL | David Tkatch (1) | Dayton | 6-2 | 291 | Grad. | Harmony, Pa. |
| DEFENSE | | | | | | |
| DL | Will Buck (2) | San Diego | 6-0 | 285 | RSr. | Sacramento, Calif. |
| DL | Finn Claypool (1, FRotY) | Drake | 6-1 | 240 | RSo. | Des Moines, Iowa |
| DL | Jonathan Hammond (2) | Davidson | 6-3 | 225 | Sr. | Dunwoody, Ga. |
| DL | Sam Schadek (1) | Dayton | 6-3 | 270 | Grad. | Columbus, Ohio |
| LB | Mike Arrington (1) | Marist | 6-0 | 213 | Grad. | Ashburn, Va. |
| LB | Nate Arthur (2) | Dayton | 5-11 | 222 | Grad. | Cincinnati, Ohio |
| LB | Jonathan Bunce (1) | St. Thomas | 6-3 | 239 | Jr. | Edina, Minn. |
| LB | Chase Lyons (2) | San Diego | 6-4 | 225 | Sr. | Aurora, Colo. |
| DB | Rassie Littlejohn (1) | Stetson | 6-1 | 173 | RSr. | Gainesville, Ga. |
| DB | Yusef Leak (2) | St. Thomas | 6-0 | 178 | Jr. | Orlando, Fla. |
| DB | Cole Hildebrand (H) | Dayton | 6-4 | 194 | RJr. | Cincinnati, Ohio |
| DB | Cooper Krezek (H) | Morehead State | 6-0 | 200 | RJr. | Kansas City, Mo. |
| SPECIAL TEAMS | | | | | | |
| PK | Luka Zurak (1, PotY) | Butler | 6-0 | 188 | RSr. | Cleveland, Ohio |
| P | Luka Zurak (1, PotY) | Butler | 6-0 | 188 | RSr. | Cleveland, Ohio |
| RS | Andrew McElroy (2) | St. Thomas | 6-3 | 184 | So. | Bolingbrook, Ill. |
| LS | Justin Iaccio (1) | Marist | 6-0 | 208 | RSr. | Mullica Hill, N.J. |

Previous season's honor(s) received in parentheses: 1 – First Team All-PFL selection; 2 – Second Team All-PFL selection; H – Honorable Mention selection; PotY – was a Player of the Year honoree (Offense, Defense, or Special Teams); FRotY – Freshman of the Year honoree (Offense or Defense).