

Same Team Another Championship

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It's that time of year again Cru! The UMHB Crusaders football team kicked off their 2022 campaign Saturday, September 3rd with a 62-13 win over nationally ranked opponents Muhlenberg College. The Crusaders will hope that this is a sign of things to come, as they look to defend their title as the reigning NCAA Division 3 National Champions. Leading the charge will be first-year head coach Larry Harmon, who was appointed in January after spending 20 seasons as UMHB's Defensive Coordinator under legendary head coach Pete Fredenburg. Harmon has helped lead UMHB to 17 Conference Championships and 2 National Titles in his 20 years as DC, and has reiterated the importance of maintaining the team's winning culture, "The culture, the team culture is not gonna change, we're always gonna be a program that is going to develop young men to be better men, better fathers, better husbands. And we're going to make sure that we're competing at everything, being the first to class, sitting in the front, you know, just having that winning attitude. We don't talk just about winning, we talk about being the very best at everything you do, and the byproduct of that is a success, and the wins come because of that. The X's and O's will change, the game of football changes, so the fans will see us do some things differently than what we've done in the past, but the core, the foundations of what this program was built on, that's not gonna change, that's a proven winning format, and there's no reason to change that."

The fans certainly will see some changes in this year's Cru football, with the introduction of UMHB alum, and former UMHB Quarterback Andy Padron as the team's Offensive Coordinator. Padron comes in after serving as Offensive Coordinator at DeSoto High School for the last 3 seasons, and looks to inject some more pace into the UMHB offense." Andy is a very intelligent, very meticulous guy, he brings a lot of experience, he was our QB in '04 and was the first QB in our history to win a playoff game, so he brings that competitive edge, and that experience. His tempo is faster than what we had last year, it's a QB-friendly offense, where our QBs are going to get us in the right place, so we're not necessarily running uphill at times, and the kids are really excited." In addition to these exciting changes on the offensive side of the ball, there seems to be a changing of the guard happening on the defense as well. With the Cru graduating 6 starters from last year's Championship defense, Coach Harmon and new Defensive Coordinator Jack Johnson will have to look to their younger players to step up and fill that void, " We have lots of talented young players, but they're young, so we've lost a lot of experience from guys who have played in Nat'l championships, and were trying to develop that right now, and to say that I don't have my concerns or I'm not nervous about it would be a lie. I mean it's something we talk about every day, now, if we didn't have talented kids there right now, it'd be a lot worse, so it's not like we're toothless, we have really good players, it's just getting them the knowledge and the experience to make up for all the knowledge and experience that we lost. That's gonna take a while, that's not something you do in 12 practices, we'll be working on that well into the playoffs, that's just gonna be a work in progress".

With all this change on and off the field, the Cru will certainly be an exciting team to watch this year, as we watch them learn and grow as a unit, but Coach Harmon and this team have made one thing clear, their eyes are on the prize! “We’re very talented, we have a tremendous team speed, we might be the fastest team we’ve ever had at UMHB, and though we’re inexperienced, we’re gonna have to grow up fast and go out and execute, the kids know what the expectations are, we’re expecting to be successful, we’re expecting to go compete for a national championship, and that’s not just pressure I feel as the head coach, the players feel that too, that’s what this team wants to do, our mantra right now is S.T.A.C. 22, an acronym for Same Team Another Championship — and that’s what we’re trying to get. No senior class at UMHB has ever won back to back national championships and that’s what this senior class wants to leave their mark on this university.”