

Tenaflly football preview, 2021: Tigers out to follow up 8-0 season

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Tenaflly running back Kenny Uchida picked up more than 1,100 yards from scrimmage last year and returns for a Tigers squad that won the Ivy Division title with an 8-0 record. Steve Hockstein | For NJ Advance Media

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Team name: Tenaflly Tigers

Head coach: Peter Toale | 16-21 record | 5th season at school

Last year's record: 8-0

2021 Starting SI rating: 58.53

Division: Super Football Conference, Ivy Red division

Division opponents: Bergen Tech, Cliffside Park, Dickinson, Fair Lawn, Ferris, Memorial, Snyder

Key Players: Kenny Uchida, RB, Sr.; Emmet Goldberg, QB, Jr.; Jonghun Jeong, OG/MLB, Sr.; Barrett Abramowitz, OT/DT, Sr.; David Levine, RB, Jr.

Outlook:

Tenaflly rocketed to long-awaited success in 2020, posting an undefeated season and claiming the Ivy Division championship. Tenaflly's eight wins in 2020 equaled the total of Tigers victories from the previous three years combined. What do the Tigers need to do to put on an encore performance?

Tenaflly's opponents usually take the field with more size and athleticism than the Tigers. But Tenaflly's players have an attention to detail that allows them to compensate for their physical disadvantages. Tenaflly's Wing-T offense relies on deception, pre-snap motions and precise timing; the Tigers used the system to score more than 34 points per game in 2020. The defensive players have a deep understanding of their 4-4 structure and adjust well to what they see; Tenaflly allowed barely more than seven points a game last year.

Five starters return on both sides of the ball. If this year's group is as committed to mastering its craft as last year's Tigers were, Tenaflly could put together another impressive campaign.

Kenny Uchida (5-8, 150) is the top returning threat on offense. The Tigers' leading rusher last year, Uchida received all-division honors from NJ.com. He scored four touchdowns in Tenaflly's season-ending 48-6 win over Memorial. He'll share the backfield with first-year starter David Levine, who will support the run game with his toughness and knowledge of his assignments. Junior fullback Will Zinna will set blocks for the pair.

Offensive line play is critically important for Wing-T teams, and guard Jonghun Jeong (5-11, 195) and tackle Barrett Abramowitz will have the most prominent roles. Jeong calls out the protection schemes for his teammates to follow. Third-year starter Abramowitz is one of the largest Tigers and uses that size to pave paths for his backs to follow. Sophomore tackle Cole Mogensen will start for the first time this year and could eventually give the Tigers another reliable lineman.

Jeong doubles as the team's leading tackler. The middle linebacker runs the defense and registered 11 tackles and three sacks in Tenaflly's victory over Memorial. NJ.com placed Jeong on its all-division team at linebacker.

Emmet Goldberg will start at quarterback this season after serving as the backup for two years. He saw the field on both sides of the ball in 2020 and picked off one pass on defense.

2021 schedule:

Sept. 11: at Snyder, 7

Sept. 17: vs. Dickinson, 6:30

Sept. 25: at Cliffside Park, 1

Oct. 1: at Memorial, 7

Oct. 8: vs. Ferris, 7

Oct. 15: vs. Fair Lawn, 7

Oct. 22: vs. Bergen Tech, 7

Nov. 25: at Dumont, 10:30