

▶▶▶ RUNNING BACKS BY JOHN BORTON

Michigan didn't feature a true returning starter at running back last year. In 2020, the Wolverines go into the fall with three who qualify.

U-M employed a pair of freshman backs last year, with considerable success. They'll be joined this season by a veteran who missed 2019 via suspension, along with others who are looking to crack a deep rotation.

The old saying goes, you cannot have enough good backs in the Big Ten, given the rigors of the season and the physicality involved. The Wolverines are about to underscore that point once again.

BY THE NUMBERS

11

Rushing touchdowns by Charbonnet in 2019. The total set the modern-era record for a freshman running back at U-M, breaking Mike Hart's old mark of nine.

26

Michigan touchdown runs in 2019. It marked the third straight year in which the Wolverines have run to paydirt 26 times over the course of a season.

150.7

Average yards per game on the ground last fall for U-M. That ranked No. 77 in the nation in 2019.

1,959

U-M rushing yards for the 2019 campaign. It represented the fewest yards on the ground for a Jim Harbaugh team at Michigan, and the fewest by the Wolverines since they rushed for 1,954 in 2014, the final season of the Brady Hoke era in Ann Arbor.



HASSAN HASKINS

PHOTO BY PER KJELDSEN

QUOTABLE

"There is so much depth, talent and just so many ways to use everybody that's in that group."

— Michigan All-American Jon Jansen

▶▶▶ POSITION BATTLE TO WATCH

This one's easy. There's only one starting tailback at Michigan, at least at any one time. That individual gets scrutinized only slightly less than the starting quarterback. Given the Wolverines' host of candidates this year, it will be fascinating to see who gets first dibs, even when several will likely rotate.

▶▶▶ WHO'S GONE

Tailback Tru Wilson

The former walk-on opted to look elsewhere following a 2019 season in which he struggled with injury but appeared in 10 games, rushing for 221 yards and one touchdown. He played 26 games in his career as a Wolverine, but decided to pursue a graduate transfer.

▶▶▶ WHO'S BACK

Sophomore tailback Zach Charbonnet

Charbonnet proved as advertised in his true freshman season, becoming Michigan's leading rusher and performing in all 13 games. He made six starts, carried 149 times for 726 yards and 11 touchdowns, and earned third-team All-Big Ten honors from the media.

Redshirt sophomore tailback Hassan Haskins

Haskins provided the counterpunch for Charbonnet's strong running, making six starts as well. Haskins ran 121 times for 622 yards and four touchdowns — including going for 149 yards on 20 tries in his first start, Michigan's night-game rout over Notre Dame.

Fifth-year senior tailback Chris Evans

Evans sat out the 2019 season on suspension for undisclosed reasons, although at one point he tweeted that he was "going through some academic issues." The 5-11, 216-pounder's reinstatement for the winter term means he's eligible for football, and he will bring with him a résumé involving 37 games, five starts, 304 carries for 1,722 yards and 14 touchdowns, and 40 receptions for 392 yards and two scores.

Redshirt sophomore tailback Christian Turner

Turner appeared in 10 games in 2019, rushing 44 times for 171 yards and one touchdown. He also caught four passes for 13 yards, and will look for more in a crowded field.

Senior fullback Ben Mason

Mason split time at defensive line and fullback in 2019, garnering one rushing attempt for three yards and providing some crunching blocks when called upon.

▶▶▶ TOP NEWCOMER

Freshman Blake Corum

The Marshall, Va., native — who checks in at 5-8, 193 pounds — earned Gatorade Player of the Year honors in Maryland last season. The Baltimore St. Frances Academy product rushed for 1,266 yards and 19 touchdowns last fall, and he'll be looking for an opening in Michigan's array of backs.