

# 2020 Northern Illinois Football Preview



**Head Coach (Yr)**  
Thomas Hammock (2)  
**Offensive Coord.**  
Eric Eidsness (2)  
**Co-Def Coord.**  
Derrick Jackson (2)  
Robert Wimberly (2)  
**Conference/Div**  
MAC/West

Team Profile	#	Rk
2020 Team Power Rating	55.9	111
Power Ratings Diff vs Last Year	-2.2	97
2020 Strength of Schedule	60.6	103
2020 Season Win Projection	5.2	95
Returning Starters (OFF/DEF)	14 (8/6)	45
Return Starting QB (YES/NO)	YES	
Returning Production %	49%	114
Returning Offense Production	39%	117
Returning Defense Production	59%	82
2020 Recruiting (Signees)	28	91
2020 Roster Talent Rank		97

## 2020 Offense/Defense Analysis

Northern Illinois and Toledo have been the two most consistent MAC programs in the last decade or so. However, both teams stumbled in 2019 and in NIU's case, it was the worst Huskies team since 2007. NIU had a first-year coach in Thomas Hammock (former NIU RB) who wasn't hired until mid-January and a tough schedule that included 3 Power 5 teams. NIU fell to 5-7 after winning the MAC in 2018.

It doesn't look like the Huskies will be much improved in 2020. NIU does bring back QB Ross Bowers (Cal transfer) who threw for 2,130 yards here last year but had a 7-to-8 TD-to-INT ratio. On the positive side, he will have plenty of receiving options to throw to as the Huskies return their top 4 including a pair of solid TE's in Mitch Brinkman and Daniel Crawford who combined for 71 receptions in 2019. NIU does lose a 1,00 yard rusher in Tre Harbison and their best OL in RT Jordan Steckler (1st-Team All-MAC).

The defense dealt with several injuries last year especially at the LB position. The Huskies will lose 5 of their top 6 tacklers, but bring back Kyle Pugh who had 106 tackles in 2018 before getting injured early last season.

The schedule isn't as difficult as the last 2 years. However, we see NIU a clear underdog in at least 5 games and a clear favorite in only 2. It will likely come down to those remaining 5 "toss-up" games if NIU can get back to a bowl game in 2020. Right now, that looks like a less than 50% proposition.

## 2020 Schedule with BP Projected Lines

Date	Opponent	Line	Win %	Line	Total	Score	W/L/O/U
9/5	Rhode Island	-20.4	93%				
9/12	at Maryland	11.5	22%				
9/19	at E. Michigan	-0.3	51%				
9/26	at Iowa	27.7	4%				
10/3	Kent State	-2.5	57%				
10/10	C. Michigan	0.7	49%				
10/17	at Ball State	7.5	32%				
10/24	† BYU	12.2	21%				
10/31							
11/3	Buffalo	4.9	37%				
11/10	at W. Michigan	9.5	28%				
11/17	Toledo	-0.4	51%				
11/27	at Bowling Green	-11.3	78%				
<b>Projected Wins</b>		<b>5.23</b>					

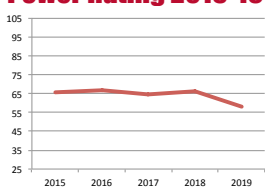
## Last 5 Year Records

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
Straight Up	8-6	5-7	8-5	8-6	5-7	34-31
Home	5-1	2-3	5-1	3-2	3-2	18-9
Away	3-3	3-3	3-3	4-3	2-5	15-17
Neutral	0-2	0-1	0-1	1-1	0-0	1-5
Conference	6-3	5-3	6-2	7-2	4-4	28-14
Non-Conf	2-3	0-4	2-3	1-4	1-3	6-17
<b>ATS</b>	<b>9-5</b>	<b>6-5-1</b>	<b>6-7</b>	<b>7-7</b>	<b>7-5</b>	<b>35-29-1</b>
Home Fav	4-2	2-2	2-3	1-3	2-2	11-12
Home Dog	0-0	0-1	1-0	1-0	1-0	3-1
Away Fav	2-1	2-1	1-2	2-1	0-2	7-7
Away Dog	3-0	2-1	2-1	2-2	4-1	13-5
Conference	6-3	6-1-1	2-6	5-4	4-4	23-18-1
Non-Conf	3-2	0-4	4-1	2-3	3-1	12-11
<b>O/U</b>	<b>7-7</b>	<b>5-6-1</b>	<b>7-6</b>	<b>4-8-2</b>	<b>7-5</b>	<b>30-32-3</b>

## ATS Stat

Northern Illinois has covered at least 6 games in every season for the past 12 years.

## End of Season Power Rating 2015-19



## 2019 Stats

	NIU	Rk	Opp	Rk
<b>Rushing</b>				
YPC	3.7	104	5.0	110
YPG	141.1	92	177.9	83
<b>Passing</b>				
Comp %	58.1%	87	58.7%	45
YPA	7.1	89	7.5	79
YPG	217.6	79	208.6	39
TD-INT	14-11		18-4	
<b>Total</b>				
YPP	5.2	100	6.1	97
YPG	358.7	104	386.5	63
<b>Scoring</b>				
PPG	22.8	103	28.2	70
<b>3rd Down</b>				
%	32.2%	117	34.0%	27
<b>Red Zone</b>				
TD %	61.3%	63	58.3%	56
Scoring %	90.3%	23	81.3%	50
<b>KO Ret</b>				
Avg	11.8	130	23.6	108
<b>Punt Ret</b>				
Avg	5.5	97	6.5	48
<b>Sacks</b>				
#	14	123	24	53
<b>TFL's</b>				
#	61	109	79	87
<b>Net Punt</b>				
Avg	39.5	39		
<b>4th Down</b>				
Off	1.9	42		
Att P/Gm	1.9			
<b>Turnovers</b>				
Margin	-6	100		
<b>Penalties</b>				
Per Game	5.2	29		

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## Scoring Quarter-By-Quarter

	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	OT	Total
NIU	57	67	70	80	0	274
Opp	66	92	80	100	0	338

## 2019 Stat Margins

	Margin	+/-	Rk
<b>Rush YPC</b>	-1.2		117
<b>Pass YPA</b>	-0.5		81
<b>YPP</b>	-0.9		112
<b>YPG</b>	-27.8		87
<b>Scoring</b>	-5.4		100

## 2019 Individual Stats

**Bold = Returning**

	Att	Yds	%	Ratio
<b>Passing</b>				
<b>Ross Bowers</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>2130</b>	<b>57.8</b>	<b>7-8</b>
Marcus Childers	82	474	58.5	6-3
<b>Rushing</b>				
Att Yds YPC TD				
Tre Harbison	230	1021	4.4	8
Marcus Childers	59	366	6.2	5
<b>Receiving</b>				
Rec Yds YPC TD				
Cole Tucker	38	531	14.0	1
Mitch Brinkman	34	445	13.1	3
Daniel Crawford	37	443	12.0	2
Tyrice Richie	32	415	13.0	4
<b>Defense</b>				
Tkl Sks TFL INT				
Mykel Williams	88	0	4	0
Vinny Labus	59	2	3	0
A. Jones-Davis	51	2	4	1
Trayshon Foster	50	0	2.5	0
Jalen McKie	48	0	2	1
Marsha Terry	39	0	1	0
<b>Kicking</b>				
FG LG XP				
John Richardson	14-18	51	30-30	
<b>Punting</b>				
Avg I20 50+ BLK				
Matt Ference	43.0	19	16	0

## 2019 Game-By-Game Recap

Teams	Open	Close	Score	ATS
Illinois State	42.5	42.5	10	Under: 8.5
Northern Illinois	-5.5	-7	24	Cover: 7
-NIU had 17-14 first down and 389-238 yard edges.				
-The teams traded first-half field goals and neither team managed to get into the end zone until NIU scored with 2:11 left in the third quarter.				
-NIU added a 32-yard interception return with 2:31 left.				
Northern Illinois	45	44.5	17	Cover: 3.5
Utah	-20	-21.5	35	Over: 7.5
-Utah had 19-14 and 407-302 yard edges including 193-67 on the ground.				
-It was a 14-14 game mid-way through the 2Q.				
-Northern Illinois used an effective mix of short passes and QB runs. Bowers hit eight different receivers from a variety of formations as the vaunted Utes defense couldn't seem to predict where the each pass was going.				
Northern Illinois	52.5	54.5	8	Under: 2.5
Nebraska	-14	-14	44	Cover: 22
-Nebraska rebounded from the poor second half vs Colorado as the Huskers had a 525-350 yard edge including 238-74 on the ground.				
Northern Illinois	51	52	18	Cover: 1
Vanderbilt	-7	-7	24	Under: 10
-Northern Illinois had 20-16 first down and 388-373 yard edges but Vandy did have a 184-108 rushing yard edge.				
-The Dores did lead 14-0 at halftime but NIU's last TD and 2-point conversion got the back-door cover.				
-After not allowing a 100-yard rusher in 17-straight games, the Huskies allowed an opponent to eclipse the century mark for the second consecutive game.				
Ball State	55.5	54.5	27	Cover: 11
Northern Illinois	-9	-4	20	Under: 7.5
<b>Misleading Final:</b> Northern Illinois had a 388-269 yard edge including a 5.2-3.6 yards per play advantage.				
-The Huskies blew a 17-3 halftime lead as they had 3 TO's and 12 penalties in the game.				
Northern Illinois	49.5	51.5	39	Cover: 8
Ohio	-6	-5	36	Over: 23.5
-Ohio led 21-10 at halftime but NIU rallied getting a 37-yard FG on the final play for the win.				
-NIU had a 510-438 yard edge.				
-NIU QB Ross Bowers threw for 338 yards.				
Northern Illinois	-2	-2.5	24	Over: 2.5
Miami (OH)	49	48.5	27	Cover: 5.5
-NIU had 22-14 first down and 350-344 yard edges				
-Miami led 27-17 before NIU scored a TD late in the 4Q.				
Akron	47.5	42.5	0	Over: 6.5
Northern Illinois	-25.5	-23	49	Cover: 26
-Northern Illinois had 21-7 first down and 345-145 yard edges including 274-94 on the ground.				
-NIU did score 2 non-offensive TD's.				
-NIU RB Tre Harbison did run for 158 yards & 2 TD's.				
Northern Illinois	-1	-1.5	10	Over: 9.5
Central Michigan	49	48.5	48	Cover: 39.5
-CMU had 24-13 first down & 615-251 yard edges including 327-22 on the ground. CMU was +4 in TO's.				
-CMU led 38-10 at HT but missed 3 FG's in the 2H.				
Northern Illinois	55	55	31	Cover: 5
Toledo	-3	-2	28	Over: 4
-Both teams had 24 first downs but Toledo did have a 508-444 yard edge. UT was -2 in TO's.				
-UT trailed 28-7 entering the 4Q and tied it at 28 with 5:07 left only to see NIU go 68 yards on 13 plays getting a 25-yard FG with :41 left.				
Eastern Michigan	52	57.5	45	Cover: 31.5
Northern Illinois	-7	-3.5	17	Over: 4.5
-EMU had 24-21 first down and 428-337 yard edges but were also +3 in TO's.				
Western Mich	-7.5	-10	14	Under: 20.5
Northern Illinois	60.5	51.5	17	Cover: 13
<b>Misleading Final</b> as WMU had 16-9 first down and 348-250 yard edges.				
WMU blew their chance at the MAC West Title in a game played in wind and rain.				

2015 (SU: 8-6, ATS: 9-5, O/U: 7-7)					2016 (SU: 5-7, ATS: 6-5-1, O/U: 5-6-1)					2017 (SU: 8-5, ATS: 6-7, O/U: 7-6)					2018 (SU: 8-6, ATS: 7-7, O/U: 4-8-2)					2019 (SU: 5-7, ATS: 7-5, O/U: 7-5)				
Date	Opponent	Line	Score	W/L/O/U	Date	Opponent	Line	Score	W/L/O/U	Date	Opponent	Line	Score	W/L/O/U	Date	Opponent	Line	Score	W/L/O/U	Date	Opponent	Line	Score	W/L/O/U
9/5	UNLV	-22	38-30	L	9/3	at Wyoming	-8	34-40	L	9/1	Boston College	+3	20-23	W	9/1	at Iowa	+10	7-33	L	8/31	Illinois St	-7	24-10	W
9/12	Murray St	-29	57-26	W	9/10	at South Florida	+14	17-48	L	9/9	Eastern Illinois	-14	38-10	W	9/8	Utah	+11	6-17	W	9/7	at Utah	+21	17-35	W
9/19	at Ohio St	+34	13-20	W	9/17	San Diego St	+11	28-42	L	9/16	at Nebraska	+11	21-17	W	9/15	Central Michigan	-13	24-16	L	9/14	at Nebraska	+14	8-44	W
9/26	at Boston Coll	+4	14-17	W	9/24	Western Illinois	-8	23-28	L	9/23	at San Diego St	+9	28-34	W	9/22	at Florida St	-10	19-23	L	9/21	at Vanderbilt	+7	18-24	W
10/3	at Central Mich	-2	19-29	L	10/1	at Ball St	+4	31-24	W	9/30	at Kent St	-23	24-3	L	10/2	at Eastern Mich	+3	26-23	W	9/28	at Vanderbilt	+7	18-24	W
10/10	Ball St	-10	59-41	W	10/8	at Western Mich	+18	30-45	W	10/14	at Buffalo	-23	24-3	L	10/10	at Ball State	-2	24-16	W	10/5	Ball St	+4	20-27	L
10/17	at Miami, Oh	-16	45-12	W	10/15	C Michigan-3OT-1	-1	28-34	L	10/13	at Bowling Green	-17	44-13	L	10/13	Ohio	-5	24-21	L	10/12	at Ohio	+5	39-36	W
10/24	Eastern Mich	-27	49-21	W	10/22	Buffalo	-23	44-7	W	10/26	Michigan-OT	-7	30-27	L	10/27	at BYU	+7	7-6	W	10/15	at Miami, OH	+2	20-27	L
10/31					10/29					11/2	at Toledo	-7	17-27	L	11/7	at Akron	-6	36-26	W	10/22	at Akron	-23	49-14	W
11/3	at Toledo	+7	32-27	W	11/1	Bowling Green	-16	45-20	W	11/9	Ball St	-29	63-17	W	11/7	at Toledo	-3	38-15	W	11/6	at Central Mich	-1	10-48	W
11/11	at Buffalo	-7	41-30	W	11/9	at Toledo	+7	24-31	P	11/15	Western Mich	-10	35-31	L	11/10	Miami, Oh	-6	21-28	L	11/9	at Toledo	+2	31-28	W
11/18	Western Mich	-3	47-19	W	11/16	E Michigan-OT-2	31-24	W	11/24	at Central Mich	+3	24-31	L	11/30	at Buffalo	+3	30-29	W	11/19	Eastern Mich	-3	17-45	L	
11/24	Ohio	-13	21-26	L	11/25	at Kent St	-6	31-21	W	12/6	at Duke	+5	14-36	L	12/18	at UAB	+1	13-37	L	11/26	Western Mich	+10	17-14	W
12/4	at Bowling Green	+13	33-34	L																				
12/23	at Boise St	+8	7-55	L																				