

Back-to-back: USF NAIA Preseason No. 1 team again

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Back-to-back national NAIA champion University of Saint Francis heads into its 21st football season with its second consecutive preseason No. 1-ranking in the NAIA Coaches' Preseason Top 25 poll released on Monday, Aug. 6.

The Cougars, 14-0 in 2017 and winners of 23 consecutive games, open the season with their earliest ever home opener on Aug. 25 at 6 p.m. against Robert Morris University. It is USF's first home opener in August in program history, the third season opening game in August.

It will kick off the 40th season for Donley, who has been named AFCA NAIA Coach of the Year in back-to-back seasons. Donley, who turned 67 on July 4, is No. 9 on the collegiate coaches' win list with 316, 202 at USF.

The USF coaching staff welcomed 122 players for preseason camp on Sunday and had two practices to start the camp on Monday. The Cougars return 10 on defense who started or played in 50 percent or more of the games last season.

USF's previous highest preseason rank was No. 2 in three consecutive preseason Top 25s 2005, 2006 and 2007 after USF finished runner-up in the NAIA FCS Championship in 2004, 2005 and 2006.

USF defeated No. 2-ranked Reinhardt University 24-13 to earn its second consecutive title and its first unbeaten season, the first unbeaten season for an Indiana collegiate football team since the University of Notre Dame won the NCAA Division 1 title in 1988 with a 12-0 record. USF's 14 wins are record for a single-season Indiana collegiate football program

USF won the 2016 NAIA Football Championship Series title game 38-17 over then second-ranked Baker University on Dec. 17, 2016. It was USF's ninth consecutive win.

USF in NAIA Coaches' Preseason Top 25 Year-by-Year

2000:	No. 9
2001:	No. 5
2002:	No. 19
2003:	No. 11
2004:	No. 4
2005:	No. 2
2006:	No. 2
2007:	No. 2
2008:	No. 4
2009:	No. 4
2010:	No. 17
2011:	No. 4
2012:	No. 6
2013:	No. 5
2014:	No. 6
2016:	No. 4
2017:	No. 1
2018	No. 1

- This is USF's 17th NAIA football No. 1 ranking, a USF record.
- 15th **consecutive** No. 1 rankings, a USF record.
- 18th time in 21 seasons that USF has been a preseason Top 25 selection
- 10th time USF has been a preseason Top 25 **Top 5** selection.
- 7th time in the last eight seasons USF is ranked in the preseason Top 10.
- 30 consecutive rankings in the Top 25 Top 5 . . . 126th Top 5 ranking
- 35 consecutive Top 25 Top 10 rankings . . . 191st overall Top 10 ranking
- 26th consecutive Top 25 ranking
- 223rd NAIA Top 25 ranking
- This is the 18th time a USF Donley coached team has been ranked No. 1.

2018 NAIA Football Coaches' Top 25 Poll – Preseason (August 6, 2018)

RANK PREVIOUS SCHOOL (1st PLACE VOTES) RECORD POINTS

1	1	Saint Francis (Ind.) (16)	14-0	366
2	2	Reinhardt (Ga.)	12-1	349
3	3	Morningside (Iowa)	13-1	340
4	4	Southern Oregon	12-1	324
5	5	Lindsey Wilson (Ky.)	11-1	310
6	6	Saint Xavier (Ill.)	10-2	296
7	7	Georgetown (Ky.)	9-2	268
7	8	Northwestern (Iowa)	10-3	268
9	9	Baker (Kan.)	10-2	259
10	11	Grand View (Iowa)	9-3	231
11	10	Southeastern (Fla.)	8-2	227
12	12	Benedictine (Kan.)	9-3	197
13	14	Dickinson State (N.D.)	9-2	178
14	13	Langston (Okla.)	10-1	177
15	18	Marian (Ind.)	7-3	167
16	15	Concordia (Mich.)	9-2	163

17	16	Sterling (Kan.)	9-3	159
18	17	Tabor (Kan.)	8-2	95
19	20	Campbellsville (Ky.)	8-2	86
20	NR	Rocky Mountain (Mont.)	6-5	75
21	21	Kansas Wesleyan	8-3	67
22	19	SAGU (Texas)	8-3	51
22	NR	Arizona Christian	7-3	51
24	22	Faulkner (Ala.)	7-3	46
25	23	Dakota State (S.D.)	8-3	44



- **Dropped from the Top 25:** Oklahoma Panhandle State, Evangel (Mo.)

- **Others Receiving Votes:** Montana Tech (44), Evangel (Mo.) (17), Oklahoma Panhandle State (15), **St. Francis (Ill.) (12)**, College of Idaho (10), William Penn (Iowa) (10), Missouri Valley (9), Midland (Neb.) (8), Bluefield (Va.) 3.