



Rhett Lashlee

Head Coach
Southern Methodist University

AWARDS & ACCOLADES

2025 FWAA Super 11 Coach of the Year
2024 Paul “Bear” Bryant National Coach of the Year Award Finalist
2024 George Munger National Coach of the Year Semi-Finalist
2024 AP ACC Coach of the Year
2024 Dave Campbell's Texas Football Coach of the Year
2024 ACC Coach of the Year
2024 Eddie Robinson National Coach of the Year Award Finalist
2023 Paul “Bear” Bryant National Coach of the Year Award Finalist
2023 Dave Campbell's Texas Football Co-Coach of the Year
2023 Eddie Robinson National Coach of the Year Award Finalist
2023 George Munger National Coach of the Year Semi-Finalist
2020 Broyles Award Semi-Finalist
2019 Broyles Award Semi-Finalist
2019 Dave Campbell's Texas Football 40 Under 40 List
2013 Broyles Award Finalist

BIOGRAPHY

Head Coach Rhett Lashlee enters his fifth season in charge in 2026.

Lashlee has a career head coaching record of 41-17 (.706).

His 38 wins from 2022-25 are the most for a head coach in his first four years in program history.

The fifth-year coach has been the driving force behind the Mustangs' return to prominence, as illustrated by the program's first appearance in the College Football Playoff (CFP) in 2024





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as the No. 11 seed, capturing the first outright conference championship (2023) since 1982, the first bowl win for the program since 2012 in January of 2026 while continuing a program-record run of being bowl-eligible for a seventh consecutive season.

The 31 wins from 2023-25 are tied for the most over three years in program history.

In 2025, Lashlee delivered high-level results again, with the Mustangs going 9-4, highlighted by the program recording its first top-10 victory since 1983 with an overtime win at home against No.10 Miami, the national runner-up. SMU also went undefeated at home in conference games for a third straight year with its 4-0 record at Ford.

Lashlee checked off another box, indicating the Mustangs are back on the national stage, knocking off No. 17 Arizona in the Trust & Will Holiday Bowl on Jan. 2, giving SMU its first bowl victory since 2012. He picked up more hardware for his success, being named the Super 11 Coach of the Year by the Football Writers Association of America (FWAA) for the first time in his career.

The Mustangs posted a 6-2 mark in ACC play, upping their record to 14-2 in conference games since joining in 2024.

Once again, Lashlee's squad was impressive on both sides of the ball, ranking in the top 25 in numerous categories, including turnovers gained (fifth), red zone defense (fifth), passes intercepted (eighth), defensive touchdowns (10th), fumbles recovered (11th), passing offense (12th), turnover margin (14th), 4th down conversion percentage (18th), rushing defense (19th), red zone offense (19th) and sacks (23rd).

The success resulted in 13 Mustangs earning All-ACC accolades.

On offense, SMU was explosive, scoring at least 30 points eight times, with 19 scoring drives coming in two minutes or less.

Kevin Jennings continued his development in his second year as the starter under Lashlee, posting career highs in completions (300), passing yards (3,641), passing touchdowns (26) and total touchdowns (30), despite battling an ankle injury throughout the season. Jennings finished the year ranked eighth nationally in passing yards and 16th in passing touchdowns.

Jennings was just one of 11 quarterbacks in all of FBS to have at least 25 passing touchdowns and four rushing touchdowns. The former South Oak Cliff standout finished in





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the top 10 in passing yards (seventh), completions per game (ninth) and passing yards per game (ninth), earning him All-ACC Honorable Mention honors.

Senior receivers Jordan Hudson and Romello Brinson both had career years in receptions and receiving yards. Graduate tight end Matthew Hibner had his best collegiate season, emerging as one of the premier tight ends in the country.

Defensively, the Mustangs made plays all over the field, led by seniors Ahmaad Moses and Isaiah Smith. Moses was named Fourth Team All-America by Phil Steele, while Smith was honorable mention. It marked the fourth straight year an SMU player has received All-America honors, all under Lashlee.

Lashlee's rise to national prominence continued in 2024, leading SMU to a mark of 11-3 and 8-0 record in conference play in its inaugural season in the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC), which resulted in an appearance in the ACC Championship. For his success, he was named the ACC Coach of the Year, while also seeing 19 Mustangs garner All-ACC accolades.

The Arkansas native was also selected as a finalist for the second straight year for the Eddie Robinson National Coach of the Year Award and the Paul "Bear" Bryant National Coach of Year Award, while also being named a semi-finalist for the George Munger National Coach of the Year Award for a second straight season.

He also took home Texas Football Coach of the Year honors from Dave Campbell's Texas Football publication, an award he shared with Texas' Steve Sarkisian in 2023, and ACC Coach of the Year by the Associated Press (AP).

The 11 wins in 2024 marked back-to-back 11-win seasons for the first time in program history, which led to the Mustangs climbing as high as seventh in the Coaches Poll and eighth in the AP Poll in the regular season. SMU finished the year ranked 12th, the highest they have been since the final poll of the 1984 season when they finished eighth.

SMU also became just the sixth program in ACC history to post an unblemished conference record at 8-0 since the conference went to an eight-game schedule format in 1992. The 8-0 record in conference play pushed the Mustangs' program record to 17 straight wins in conference play for the regular season.

SMU was the first team in history to record an undefeated conference record for a team jumping into a Power-4/5 conference from a Group of Five in its first season since 1978. Of





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those teams, only Louisville (2014) finished with a winning conference record, going 5-3 in ACC play.

Again, Lashlee's teams delivered on the road in 2024, going 5-0 during the regular season, part of a 10-game road winning streak that dated back to 2023, which ranked as second longest in school history.

The Mustangs continued to be dominant in year three under Lashlee on both sides of the ball, a key trend that has happened with the third-year coach at the helm. SMU ranked in the top 25 in FBS in 14 different categories, highlighted by top-10 rankings in defensive touchdowns (5th), rushing defense (7th), scoring offense (9th) and team sacks (10th).

Despite the step up into a power conference, the Mustangs continued to produce on offense at an elite level, averaging 36.5 points a game on the year, the seventh highest average for a season in program history. The 511 points scored in 2024 were third most in program history.

The development of quarterback Kevin Jennings under Lashlee in 2024 played a major role in securing the first-ever CFP berth for the Mustangs. Under Lashlee, Jennings became one of the most electric and efficient quarterbacks in all of college football, throwing for 3,245 yards and 23 touchdowns and while rushing for 354 yards and five scores on the ground. After Jennings was made the starter in Week 3, he posted an offensive grade of 87.5 by PFF, the third highest for any ACC player during that stretch.

With Jennings running the offense, the Mustangs were 9-2 and averaged 37.1 points per game. During his time as the starter, SMU posted a nine-game winning streak, matching 2023's run as the second longest in program history. For his play, Jennings was First Team All-Texas by Dave Campbell's Texas Football, All-ACC Third Team by the conference and a finalist for the Earl Campbell Tyler Rose Award.

Brashard Smith was another factor in the historical success in 2024, converting the Miami transfer, whom he recruited while the offensive coordinator there, into a full-time running back.

The conversion led to a breakout season for the senior, who gave SMU an explosive option coming out of the backfield. Smith recorded 1,977 all-purpose yards, the most in a single season in SMU history. He also became the 12th Mustang to eclipse the 1,000-yard rushing mark and finished fourth in the single-season record books with 1,332.





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The senior earned many accolades during and following his breakout season, including earning All-America status by four major publications (Associated Press, AFCA, Sporting News, Phil Steele) while also being named to the All-ACC First Team by the conference. The elusive back was also named First Team All-Texas by Dave Campbell's Texas Football publication.

Defensively, the Mustangs put together another stout year, ranking in the top 25 in FBS rankings in eight different categories. SMU allowed just 100.2 rushing yards per game, which was third lowest average for a single season in program history. The 43 sacks ranked as the third most in program history. The Mustangs held six teams to 20 points or less, the second straight season accomplishing the feat.

The success on defense led to All-America Honorable Mention honors for Isaiah Nwokobia and Kobe Wilson by the Phil Steele publication.

Lashlee delivered a conference championship in his second year, going 11-3 and undefeated in AAC play (8-0).

SMU's 11 wins and nine-game winning streak in 2023 were the most since the 1982 National Championship team. The Mustangs also finished out the year ranked 22nd in the AP Top 25 Poll, the first time appearing in the final poll since 1984. SMU made a bowl game for a fifth straight season, making an appearance in the Wasabi Fenway Bowl against Boston College.

Lashlee made history on Dec. 2, 2023 with a 26-14 victory over No. 22 Tulane in the AAC Championship game, giving the Mustangs their first conference championship since 1984 and 12th overall as a program. It was the first outright conference title won by the school since 1982.

The success of the season has resulted in various accolades for the team and coach himself, including a record-tying 18 AAC All-Conference selections. Lashlee was also named a finalist for the prestigious Paul "Bear" Bryant Coach of the Year Award, handed out the nation's top coach as voted on by the National Sports Media Association, the Bryant Awards' Executive Leadership Team, and the Bryant Family.

The Arkansas native was also named Co-Coach of the Year by the Dave Campbell's Texas Football publication, a finalist of the Eddie Robinson Coach of the Year Award, and a semi-finalist for the George Munger National Coach of the Year Award.





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SMU was dominant all season long in 2023 on both sides of the ball, ranking in the top 25 in the FBS in numerous categories including: third down defense (4th), defensive touchdowns (1st), fewest penalties per game (18th), first down offense (6th), passing offense (22nd), passing yards allowed (13th), passing yards per completion (12th), red zone defense (25th), red zone offense (8th), sacks allowed (13th), scoring defense (11th), scoring offense (8th), tackles for loss allowed (9th), team passing efficiency defense (9th), team sacks (3rd), team tackles for loss (16th), total defense (12th) and total offense (16th).

On offense, the 542 points ranked second highest in program history. The 29 rushing touchdowns were the third most in program history. The Mustangs scored at least 55 points four times in 2023, the most in program history for a single season. Lashlee's offense also finished top five in program history in first downs (1st), passing touchdowns (5th), passing yards (5th) and total yards (tied for 1st).

Quarterback Preston Stone led the attack for Lashlee's offense, posting career highs in passing yards (3,197) and passing touchdowns (28). Stone's 161.3 passing efficiency rating led all quarterbacks in the AAC. For his great play, Stone earned All-AAC Third Team honors in his first year starting under Lashlee.

Defensively, the Mustangs were one of the elite teams in the country. The 47 sacks rank second in program history for a single year. SMU took it to the conference opposition this past season, posting an average margin of victory of 28.9 points (45.9-17.0) in conference games on the year, the largest margin for any FBS team in conference play in 2023. SMU also finished first in all of FBS in defensive touchdowns with five. The Mustangs' two shutouts during the regular season were the most by the team since 2012.

Lashlee completed his first season (2022) as head coach on the Hilltop with a 7-5 regular season record, and an appearance in the New Mexico Bowl against BYU. Under his leadership, the Mustangs ranked 14th in the nation in total offense, 12th in scoring offense, and seventh in both red zone offense and passing offense. Furthermore, the Mustangs were among the best-disciplined teams in the nation, committing the 11th fewest penalties across FBS teams.

The appearance in the New Mexico Bowl made the Mustangs bowl eligible for the fourth straight season. The streak is the longest since SMU went to four bowls from 2009-12 and made the Mustangs bowl eligible in five of the past six seasons. The program has won at least seven games each season dating back to 2019, making it the longest stretch with at





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least seven wins since the 2009-12 seasons. It was also the first season the Mustangs have won five conference games since going 6-2 in league play in 2019.

Rashee Rice was named a second-team All-American by multiple organizations, Collin Rogers and RJ Maryland were among freshman All-America mentions and four Mustangs earned All-American Athletic Conference honors led by first-team selection Rice.

Lashlee, who served as offensive coordinator for the Mustangs for two seasons (2018-19), also served as the offensive coordinator at Miami in 2020 and 2021. A one-time finalist (2013) and two-time semifinalist (2019, 2020) for the Broyles Award, Lashlee has the distinction of being the only coach ever nominated for the Broyles Award four different times at four different schools (Arkansas State, Auburn, SMU, Miami).

During his time at Miami, Lashlee's first season saw the Hurricanes jump to No. 32 in the FBS in total offense (from No. 98), No. 29 in passing offense (from No. 52), No. 26 in scoring offense (from No. 90), No. 17 in red zone offense (from No. 122) and No. 20 in first downs gained (from No. 84). In 2021, Miami again ranked 26th in scoring average, improving to 34.1 PPG, and jumped up to 22nd in total offense at 448.8 yards per game.

Under his watch, QB D'Eriq King was a semifinalist for the Maxwell Award, Johnny Unitas Golden Arm Award and Davey O'Brien Award. Several offensive players enjoyed career years under his tutelage, including Michael Harley, who became the school's all-time leading wide receiver, and TE Brevin Jordan, who was a Mackey Award semifinalist and an eventual 2021 NFL Draft pick of the Houston Texans. In 2021, freshman Tyler Van Dyke was named the ACC Rookie of the Year, and Charleston Rambo broke the Miami single-season receiving yards and receptions record.

Prior to heading to Coral Gables, Lashlee helped lead the Mustangs to a 10-3 finish in 2019, guiding an offense that ranked No. 7 in FBS in scoring (41.8 points per game), No. 13 in passing offense (309 yards per game), No. 9 in total offense (489.8 yards per game) and No. 12 in first downs gained (322). SMU's 10 wins were the school's most since the 1984 season, and its 35 rushing touchdowns set a school record.

The Mustangs were ranked No. 3 nationally in plays per game, averaging 80.9 – a testament to Lashlee's up-tempo offensive style. SMU was one of only 34 teams in FBS to average more than six yards per play in 2019. Quarterback Shane Buechele threw for 3,929 yards with 34 touchdowns and just 10 interceptions, completing 63 percent of his passes. Running back Xavier Jones rushed for 1,276 yards and 23 touchdowns, averaging 5.2 yards per carry.





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His 23 TDs led the nation. James Proche led the nation with 111 catches. All three were first-team All-AAC selections.

In his first season at SMU, the Mustang offense ranked 27th nationally in passing offense at 271.7 yards per game. Quarterback Ben Hicks registered 2,582 yards and 19 touchdowns to finish his SMU career as the all-time leader in passing yards (9,081), total offense (8,977), TD passes (71), TDs responsible for (74), completions (718) and 300-yard games (12). His season passing yards ranked 11th at SMU, while his 19 touchdowns tied him for eighth. Wide receiver Proche was named a first-team All-AAC selection, and finished the season ranked fifth nationally in receptions per game (7.8), seventh in receiving touchdowns (12) and ninth in receiving yards (1,199).

Prior to joining SMU's staff, Lashlee served as an offensive coordinator for seven seasons, spending 2017 at UConn, 2013-16 at Auburn, 2012 at Arkansas State and 2011 at Samford.

In his only season in Storrs, Lashlee improved the Huskies' offense significantly, as UConn jumped from 122nd to 49th in the nation in total offense and from 94th to 34th in passing offense.

Prior to UConn, Lashlee helped Auburn to the 2013 SEC Championship, a BCS Championship berth and the 2016 Sugar Bowl, managing one of the more prolific offenses in college football during his tenure. The 2013-14 seasons were the best back-to-back offensively in Auburn history, and the 2014 squad set an Auburn record for total offense. Lashlee also served as the quarterbacks coach and demonstrated impressive ability to develop talent. In 2013, Auburn had the second biggest turnaround in college football history. Starting QB Nick Marshall did not practice until August, but Lashlee tutored the junior college transfer to 3,044 yards of total offense (1,976 passing, 1,068 rushing), 14 TD passes and 12 rushing TDs.

Lashlee was the offensive coordinator at Arkansas State (2012), helping the Red Wolves to a Sun Belt Championship and quarterback Ryan Aplin to Conference Player of the Year honors, and at Samford (2011), after having served as a graduate assistant at Auburn (2009-10) and Arkansas (2006). While at Auburn as an offensive graduate assistant during the 2009-10 seasons, Lashlee assisted Gus Malzahn with all aspects of the offense and coached the quarterbacks and slot receivers in 2010. In 2009, the Tigers finished 8-5 winning the Outback Bowl. During the 2010 season, he helped the Tigers finish 14-0, winning the SEC title and the BCS National Championship behind Heisman Trophy winning





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quarterback Cam Newton. Lashlee coached at Springdale (Ark.) High School in 2004-05, working with the quarterbacks and 2005 National Player of the Year Mitch Mustain.

Lashlee graduated from Arkansas in 2006 with a degree in marketing and business administration. He received his master's degree in higher education from Auburn in 2009.

He is married to the former Lauren Lee. They have twin sons, Thomas and Hudson, and twin daughters, Rowyn and Scarlet.

