

Freebirds face first major test of the season as Mercurials land in DC

West Hampstead @ Washington

The Freebirds currently lead the all-time series with a 6-4 record.

What to Know

A 2-0 Freebirds team goes up against a historically strong West Hampstead offense averaging 46.5 PPG (against 2 playoff teams last year nonetheless) through 2-weeks.

Keys To The Game

This West Hampstead team is led on offense by QB **William O'Campo**, who last season produced the 10th highest season passer rating ever. He comes out this season taking aim at more history, currently boasting a 136.6 season rating (all-time season record is 135) and a stratospheric 14.3 TD%. 6-year vet, RB **Thomas Carlson** provides the spark on the ground, averaging a quality 4.6 YPC and averaging 109-YPG. The speedy veteran WR duo of **William Armstrong** and **Carlton Torres** return for another year, both nearly identical stats through the first 2 weeks, 9/194/4 & 9/196/2, respectively. While not an overpowering unit, the WH O-line has done a fantastic job of keeping O'Campo on his feet, allowing just 3-sacks through 2-weeks, for a minimal 4.5% sack rate.

The Freebird rush defense comes in ranked 4th in the CFA but comes in with a severely banged up unit including three D-linemen and a defensive back. This has caused a severe lack of any kind of pressure in the backfield, leaving them with a ranking of T-22nd in sacks, and T-24th in TFL's. The LB core is very young, with only one player has played more than two full seasons. Speedy 3rd-year man **John Wade** leads the unit, coming in with 2-sacks on the year. Eight-year veteran CB **Patrick Kozlowski** leads the secondary, a unit that for the most part is lacking any major speed. Kozlowski does come off an elite performance last week vs Manchester, an outing that saw him bat four balls down with another two interceptions. Safeties **James Wyatt** (12-tackles/1 INT/1 DEF TD on the year) and **David Forsythe** cover the top again for the fifth season now.

The Freebird offense is led by 7th-year career Freebird starter QB **Christopher Hein**. He had a fair showing in his season debut last week, maybe shaking some rust off with a 15/27 231 1TD/1INT performance. Still, enough for the win over Manchester. RB **Tony Dwyer** has headed the backfield through two weeks, but a slow start has led to some concerns for the

9th year RB. With an abysmal 2.9 YPC, some change may be in order if he cannot find any rhythm this week. WR **Mark Hurst** leads the WR corps here with a 21.5-YPC-avg along with an 8/172/1 line to kick off the season. The Washington O-line has done a similarly impressive job of keeping Hein out of the turf, leading him to just a 3.6% sack rate while ranking just 27th in pancakes.

The Mercurial defensive line is not the strongest, but they bring the speed that most other teams cannot match. This speed has put them at the top of the CFA thru the first two weeks in sacks (tied with San Francisco), T-3rd in INTs, and T-6th in pass deflections. Much of this can also be credited to the lightning fast secondary of West Hampstead. The cornerbacks from top to bottom are the fastest unit in the league, with an average speed among their six-CBs of 96.5. The safeties don't back off any, with an average speed between 5 players of 94.4. Speed is the #1 weapon on this team, and the LBs are no different, sacrificing strength for the ability to get around the field. SS **Michael Denny** comes in this week already with 12-tackles, 2-sacks, and a forced fumble.

Injuries of Note

WH

None

WAS

DT Matthew Rogers - Jammed Toe (**Questionable**)

DE Craig Moore - Bulging Disc (**Questionable**)

DT Trinidad Spence - Broken Ribs (**OUT**)

CB Francis Smith - Ruptured Disc (**OUT**)

RB Fred Turney - Groin Pull (**OUT**)

Prediction

The Freebirds have gotten off to a quality 2-0 start, more impressive with all the injuries so early in the season, but it stops here. West Hampstead is just rolling on all cylinders right now at a historical pace. Too efficient on offense, too fast on defense. This one could get ugly quick.

Mercurials - 41

Freebirds - 14

-The Ferret