

# Auburn Offensive Coordinator History



**Auburn offensive coordinator history** is a fascinating journey through the evolution of one of college football's most storied programs. The role of the offensive coordinator at Auburn University has undergone significant changes over the years, reflecting shifts in football philosophy, recruitment, and player development. The Tigers have seen a variety of offensive strategies, from the wishbone to the spread offense, each contributing to the team's successes and challenges. This article explores the key figures and moments in Auburn's offensive coordinator history, highlighting how their strategies and impacts have shaped the program.

## Early Years of Auburn Football

Auburn University has a rich football tradition that dates back to the late 19th century. The program began to take shape in the early 1900s, but it wasn't until the 1950s and 60s that the role of the offensive coordinator became more defined.

## The Birth of the Offensive Coordinator Role

- In the early days, head coaches often managed all aspects of the team, including offensive play-calling.
- As the game evolved, the need for specialized coaching roles became apparent.
- The 1960s saw the emergence of dedicated offensive coordinators in college football, marking a shift in how teams approached offensive strategy.

## Notable Offensive Coordinators Through the

# Decades

Auburn's history is marked by several notable offensive coordinators who left their mark on the program. Below are some of the most influential figures in Auburn's offensive coordinator history.

## 1. Johnny F. Johnson (1964-1970)

- Johnson was one of the first dedicated offensive coordinators at Auburn.
- Known for implementing the wishbone offense, he helped the Tigers secure a Southeastern Conference (SEC) championship in 1969.
- His innovative approach set the stage for future offensive strategies at Auburn.

## 2. Pat Sullivan (1971-1972)

- A former Auburn quarterback, Sullivan brought a player's perspective to the offensive coordinator role.
- Under his guidance, the team developed a more balanced offensive attack, integrating both the run and pass.
- Sullivan's familiarity with the program helped solidify Auburn's identity during his tenure.

## 3. Doug Barfield (1973-1976)

- Barfield was known for his creative offensive schemes, which emphasized speed and agility.
- He introduced the option offense, which utilized mobile quarterbacks and quick running backs.
- His efforts were instrumental in developing several standout players, including future NFL stars.

## 4. Al Borges (2004-2007)

- Borges is credited with revitalizing Auburn's offense during his time as coordinator.
- He introduced a pro-style offense that leveraged the talents of standout players like Brandon Cox and Kenny Irons.
- Under Borges, Auburn won the SEC Championship in 2004 and finished the season as the number two team in the country.

## **5. Gus Malzahn (2009-2011)**

- Malzahn is perhaps one of the most significant figures in Auburn's offensive history.
- He implemented a fast-paced, spread offense that transformed the team's offensive identity.
- His tenure culminated in the 2010 national championship, where the Tigers led the nation in scoring offense.

## **Recent Developments in Offensive Coordination**

Since Malzahn's departure, Auburn has continued to evolve its offensive strategies. The school has seen several changes in the offensive coordinator position, each bringing different philosophies and approaches to the game.

### **1. Rhett Lashlee (2013-2014)**

- Lashlee returned to Auburn after stints at other programs, bringing back the up-tempo, spread offense that had been so successful under Malzahn.
- He was instrumental in developing quarterback Nick Marshall, who led the team to the 2013 national title game.
- Lashlee's time at Auburn was marked by explosive offensive performances and a return to prominence in the SEC.

### **2. Chip Lindsey (2017-2020)**

- Lindsey focused on a more balanced offensive attack, integrating both the run and pass effectively.
- His schemes aimed to utilize the strengths of the Tigers' roster, but inconsistencies marked his tenure.
- Despite some challenges, he helped develop young talent, including quarterback Bo Nix.

### **3. Mike Bobo (2021)**

- Bobo brought extensive experience from his time at Colorado State and Georgia.
- His play-calling aimed to establish a strong running game while complementing it with a more traditional passing attack.
- Bobo faced challenges in his first year, with ongoing debates about offensive consistency.

# The Impact of Offensive Coordinators on Auburn Football

The role of the offensive coordinator at Auburn has significant implications for the team's success. Each coordinator has left a unique imprint on the program, shaping its identity and influencing player development.

## 1. Offensive Philosophy and Strategy

- The evolution of offensive strategies reflects broader trends in college football.
- Coordinators have shifted from traditional, run-heavy offenses to more dynamic, pass-oriented systems.
- The adaptation to modern football trends is crucial for maintaining competitive performance within the SEC.

## 2. Player Development

- Offensive coordinators play a vital role in developing talent, particularly quarterbacks and skill position players.
- The success of notable players often correlates with the strategic vision of the offensive staff.
- Coordinators must balance the development of individual talent with broader team goals.

## 3. Recruiting and Program Identity

- Successful offensive coordinators attract recruits who fit their systems, influencing the overall talent pool.
- A clear offensive identity can enhance Auburn's appeal to high school prospects, impacting future seasons.
- The alignment of recruiting strategies with offensive philosophy is essential for long-term success.

## Conclusion

In summary, the **auburn offensive coordinator history** is a tapestry woven from the contributions of various coaches who have shaped the program over the years. Each coordinator brought their unique style and philosophy, influencing the team's performance and identity. As Auburn continues to navigate the ever-evolving landscape of college football, the legacy of its offensive coordinators will remain a critical part of its storied history. Understanding this history not only highlights the importance of the offensive coordinator role but also provides insights into what the future may hold for Auburn.

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## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Who was the first offensive coordinator in Auburn's history?**

The first offensive coordinator in Auburn's history was Johnny McMakin, who held the position in the early 1970s.

### **Which offensive coordinator is credited with leading Auburn to a national championship?**

Gus Malzahn, serving as offensive coordinator in 2010, is credited with leading Auburn to a national championship that year.

### **How many offensive coordinators has Auburn had since 2000?**

Since 2000, Auburn has had six different offensive coordinators.

### **What offensive scheme is Auburn known for under its recent offensive coordinators?**

Auburn is known for its up-tempo, spread offense, particularly under Gus Malzahn and Chip Lindsey.

### **Who was Auburn's offensive coordinator before the hiring of Mike Bobo in 2021?**

The offensive coordinator before Mike Bobo was Chad Morris, who served in that role in 2020.

### **Which Auburn offensive coordinator had a notable career in the NFL?**

Al Borges, who served as offensive coordinator at Auburn from 2004 to 2007, went on to have a notable career coaching in the NFL.

### **What impact did Gus Malzahn's offensive strategies have on college football?**

Gus Malzahn's offensive strategies, particularly his emphasis on the hurry-up offense, influenced many programs at the college level and contributed to the evolution of offensive schemes in football.

## How did Auburn's offensive performance change under coordinator Rhett Lashlee?

Under Rhett Lashlee from 2013 to 2014, Auburn's offense became more explosive and dynamic, leading to a significant improvement in scoring and yardage.

## What was one of the main criticisms of Auburn's offensive coordinators in recent years?

One of the main criticisms of Auburn's offensive coordinators in recent years has been inconsistency in play-calling and the inability to adapt during crucial game situations.

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