

NORTH TEXAS ROSTER

No.	Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Yr.
0	Bryson Jackson	WR	6-0	188	So.
0	Ethan Mooney	K	6-0	200	Jr.
1	KD Davis	LB	6-0	229	Jr.
2	Austin Aune	QB	6-2	216	So.
2	DeShawn Gaddie	DB	6-2	188	So.
3	Caleb Colvin	DL	6-3	307	Sr.
3	DeAndre Torrey	RB	5-7	199	Sr.
4	Dillion Williams	DB	6-0	185	Fr.
5	Tommy Bush	WR	6-5	199	So.
5	Tyreke Davis	LB	5-10	192	Sr.
6	Loranzo Thompson	DB	6-0	170	Fr.
8	John Davis	DB	6-1	190	Jr.
8	Amani Gilmore	QB	6-2	220	Rfr.
9	Grayson Murphy	DE	6-3	255	Rfr.
10	Jace Ruder	QB	6-3	228	So.
10	Makyle Sanders	DB	6-0	199	Sr.
11	Detraevon Brown	WR	6-2	194	Fr.
11	Gabriel Murphy	DE	6-3	255	Rfr.
13	Khatib Lyles	WR	6-2	224	Rfr.
13	Jordan Rucker	DB	6-0	190	So.
14	Roderic Burns	WR	5-10	185	So.
15	Bryce Drummond	QB	6-3	205	Fr.
15	Carson Kropp	LB	6-1	227	So.
16	Jonathan Pickett	DL	6-3	253	Fr.
16	Jyaire Shorter	WR	6-2	210	So.
17	Kason Martin	QB	6-3	218	So.
18	Dorian Morris	WR	5-10	187	Rfr.
19	Jordan Brown	LB	6-0	219	Fr.
19	Caleb Johnson	WR	6-0	188	Fr.
20	Evan Greene	WR	6-0	184	Fr.
20	Cole McCrary	LB	6-2	240	So.
21	Keith Jackson	RB	5-11	208	Fr.
21	Kevin Wood	LB	6-1	219	So.
22	Keelan Crosby	DB	6-1	182	So.
23	Isaiah Johnson	RB	6-0	216	Fr.
24	Quinn Whitlock	DB	6-0	189	Jr.
25	Sean-Thomas Faulkner	LB	5-11	190	Jr.
25	Ikaika Ragsdale	RB	6-0	212	Fr.
26	Ridge Texada	DB	5-10	181	Fr.
27	Oscar Adaway III	RB	6-0	217	Rfr.
27	Harold West	DB	6-1	194	Fr.
29	Nate Durham	DS	6-2	238	Jr.
29	Braelon Hill	DB	5-10	184	Jr.
30	Var'Keyes Gumms	TE	6-3	230	Fr.
30	Larry Nixon III	LB	6-2	236	So.
31	Robert Johnson	DB	6-1	190	Fr.
32	Bernardo Rodriguez	P	5-10	203	Jr.
34	Kyleb Howell	LB	6-0	216	Sr.
35	Chris Wright	LB	6-3	224	Fr.
36	Jaylen Smith	DB	6-0	205	Fr.
37	Taylor Jacobs	LB	6-2	234	Rfr.
38	Jordan Nichols	DB	6-1	194	Fr.
39	Ayo Adeyi	RB	5-7	197	Rfr.
40	Edward Bautista	TE	6-0	224	Rfr.
40	Jacobi Johnson	LB	6-3	239	Fr.
41	Alphie Guillory	DB	5-11	184	Rfr.
42	Kameron Hill	DE	6-3	246	Sr.
43	Trey Perdue	DB	5-10	170	Fr.
44	Dawson Nobriga	RB	5-6	194	So.
44	Blake Slaughter	LB	5-10	190	Fr.
45	Landon Maston	LB	6-1	225	Jr.
46	Grady Brewer	LB	6-0	225	Fr.
46	Xzavior Kautai	TE	6-2	235	Fr.
47	Jacob Daulong	LB	6-1	230	Jr.
47	Caden McNeese	P	5-10	178	Fr.
48	Caden Gilmore	K	5-11	166	Fr.
49	Aaron Beckham	K	5-9	165	Fr.
50	Trent Ward	DL	6-3	283	Fr.
51	Fatafehi Vailea	DL	6-2	302	Fr.
52	Dane Jackson	OL	6-0	282	Fr.
54	Kevin Greene	DL	6-3	300	Fr.
56	Jacob Brammer	OL	6-4	301	Jr.
57	Brandon Oldham	DS	6-2	226	Fr.
58	Teeshaun Turpin	OL	6-4	300	Jr.
59	Sifa Leota	LB	6-2	217	Fr.
60	Chris Cassidy	OL	6-4	292	Rfr.
62	Caden Reeves	OL	6-4	315	Fr.
64	Jett Duncan	OL	6-2	291	Fr.
65	Gabe Blair	OL	6-3	303	Fr.
66	Febechi Nwaiwu	OL	6-3	310	Fr.
68	Daxton Byers	OL	6-5	307	Rfr.
70	Kade Bond	OL	6-3	298	Fr.
72	Manase Mose	OL	6-1	292	Jr.
73	Cole Brown	OL	6-4	292	So.
74	Nick Gallo	OL	6-3	295	So.
77	Kaci Moreka	OL	6-5	310	So.
78	Daizion Carroll	OL	6-2	319	So.
79	John Brunner	OL	6-5	327	Rfr.
80	Zhigihl McMillan	WR	6-1	198	Fr.
83	Damon Ward	WR	6-0	198	Rfr.
84	Christian Lee	TE	6-3	226	Fr.
87	Jake Roberts	TE	6-4	244	Fr.
88	Jason Pirtle	TE	6-2	219	Sr.
89	Asher Alberding	TE	6-4	246	Rfr.
90	Ta'Shoy Johnson	DL	6-1	265	Fr.
91	Dayton LeBlanc	DL	6-1	283	So.
93	Roderick Brown	DT	6-1	285	Fr.
94	Kalvin Hutchings	DL	6-4	265	So.
95	Kortlin Rausaw	DL	6-3	275	Fr.
96	Enoch Jackson	DL	6-0	288	Rfr.
97	Dion Novil	DL	6-4	308	Sr.
99	Kenneth Dotson	DL	6-3	257	Rfr.

Coaches/staff

Seth Littrell	Head coach
Tommy Mainord	Associate HC, Co-OC, wide rec.
Mike Bloesch	Offensive coordinator, offensive line
Phil Bennett	Defensive coordinator, safeties
Patrick Cobbs	Running backs
Jim Gush	Linebackers
Jarred Holley	Cornerbacks
Blake Joseph	Quarterbacks
Adrian Mayes	Tight ends
Matt Passwaters	Defensive line
Chris Petrilli	Outside LBs special teams
Steven Haunga	Quality control offense
Zack Womack	Strength and conditioning
Ethan Gold	Assistant strength and conditioning
Shane Elder	Assistant AD for football ops.
George Matsakis	Coordinator, football operations
Luke Walerius	Chief of staff
Mackenzie Morris	Recruiting operations



Staff and wire photos

North Texas tight end Jason Pirtle, left, and wide receiver Roderic Burns, top right, have emerged as key players after the Mean Green lost several top players to injury early in the season. The duo and a group of talented young running backs that includes redshirt freshman Ayo Adeyi, bottom right, helped guide UNT to the Frisco Football Classic. The Mean Green will face Miami (Ohio) on Thursday.

Surprise stars powering UNT

By Brett Vito
Staff Writer
bvito@dentonrc.com

North Texas coach Seth Littrell couldn't help but be amazed at the sight of tight end Jason Pirtle taking on all defenses threw at him as the Mean Green won five straight games to cap the regular season.

The senior tight end was barely in UNT's plans at the beginning of the year. A run of injuries to UNT's top players made Pirtle and wide receiver Roderic Burns focal points for the Mean Green's offense during a season-ending run that landed them in the Frisco Football Classic.

UNT will face Miami (Ohio) on Dec. 23 at Toyota Stadium in a showdown of 6-6 teams.

Both Pirtle and Burns started their UNT careers as walk-ons.

"I am happy with the way those guys responded," Littrell said. "They knew that they had to play a bigger role. We didn't have a lot of room for error. Teams bracketed Pirtle on third downs late in the year, which was unimaginable not all that long ago."

There are a host of reasons UNT will play in a bowl game for the fifth time in six seasons under Littrell. One of the biggest was the way Pirtle, Burns and a handful of other players handled the transition from playing bit roles to becoming mainstays of the Mean Green's offense.

UNT lost running back Oscar Adaway III to a knee injury before the season started. Wide receivers Jyaire Shorter and Tommy Bush were gone by the third week of the season after suffering serious injuries as well. Deonte Simpson, another key wide receiver, was dismissed for a violation of team rules after he played in three games.

The Mean Green's only hope to make up for those losses was that some of their young players and seldom-used veterans would step forward and fill larger roles.

That is exactly what Pirtle, Burns and a few

EMERGING THREATS

North Texas rallied from a 1-6 start by winning five straight games behind a host of players who stepped in after the Mean Green lost multiple key players who were either injured or dismissed for violations of team rules. The following is a look.



54

Catches wide receiver Roderic Burns has this season while rolling up 715 yards. He had 14 catches in two years heading into the season.

38

Receptions this season for tight end Jason Pirtle, matching his career total heading into the season.

young running backs did.

"It's been a crazy year with all the injuries," Pirtle said. "The coaches preach, 'Next man up.' That has shown this year."

"This team has been one of the strongest I have been on as far as sticking together and everyone being ready when their number is called."

Pirtle and Burns are among the players UNT turned to after losing Shorter and Bush.

Burns came into the season with 14 receptions for 180 yards in two seasons with the Mean Green. He nearly matched his career totals in a loss to SMU by catching 12 passes for 141 yards.

Burns leads UNT with 54 receptions for 715 yards and four touchdowns.

"When you come to work every day and work hard, it pays off," Burns said.

That has certainly been the case for Pirtle. He had been a bit player in UNT's offense for the last two seasons and had 38 career catches heading

into the year.

Pirtle has matched his career total with 38 catches this fall for 351 yards and two touchdowns.

Both Burns and Pirtle came through at key times during the Mean Green's winning streak.

Pirtle led UNT with five catches in its 38-14 win over Southern Miss in the second game of the Mean Green's winning streak. He caught two passes to convert third downs on touchdown drives.

Burns caught a 25-yard touchdown pass in UNT's 20-17 win over UTEP in the Mean Green's third win during its season-ending run.

Redshirt freshman running back Ayo Adeyi emerged as a key part of UNT's running backs rotation that also includes freshmen Ikaika Ragsdale and Isaiah Johnson.

None of those players was expected to play key roles this season. Each got their opportunity after UNT lost Adaway, a player the Mean Green depended on to complement starter DeAndre Torrey.

All three came through. Ragsdale is UNT's second-leading rusher with 511 yards and has five touchdowns. Adeyi has added 479 yards and six touchdowns, while Johnson has 338 yards and four scores.

"There is no chance we would be where we are now without guys like Pirtle and Burns," Littrell said. "They stepped up. The young running backs stepped up as well. There were teams you could see tap out. They didn't want to be run over anymore. I could see defensive backs wear down."

Coming through when UNT needed them the most has been gratifying for the players the Mean Green turned to after they lost several of their key skill position players early in the season.

"You have to be ready when your number is called," Pirtle said. "I have missed having the pressure on me. It's been really nice. I have enjoyed making my last season my best season."

BRETT VITO can be reached at 940-566-6870 and via Twitter at @brettvito

NORTH TEXAS TEAM STATISTICS & LEADERS

Team stats		Punts	8.5	9.9	Passing			Tommy Bush	3	43	14.3	0		
UNT	Opponents	Penalties	68.3	67.3	Player	C-A-I	Yards	TDs	Ikaika Ragsdale	4	23	5.8	0	
Points per game	28.6	27.5	Time of possession	30:30	29:27	Austin Aune	136-263-7	1,763	9	Tackles				
First downs	283	2225	3rd down conversions	82-197	65-171	Jace Ruder	53-98-5	571	3	Player	Solo	Assist	Total	
Rushing		4th down conv	15-36	65-171	Receiving									
Rushing yards	2,954	1,778	Fumbles-lost	14-4	24-12	Player	Rec	Yards	Avg.	TDs				
Rushing TDs	30	17	Sacks-yards lost	34-237	14-89	Roderic Burns	54	715	13.2	4	Tyreke Davis	46	61	107
Avg. per game	246.2	148.2	Individual stats		Rushing									
Passing yards	2,334	2,760	Player	Att.	Yards	Avg.	TDs							
C-A-I	189-362-12	205-351-6	DeAndre Torrey	248	1,215	4.9	13	Larry Nixon III	29	34	63			
Touchdowns	12	23	Ikaika Ragsdale	89	511	5.7	5	DeShawn Gaddie	33	18	51			
Avg. per game	194.5	230.0	Ayo Adeyi	78	485	6.1	6	Kevin Wood	25	23	48			
Total offense				Isaiah Johnson	76	338	4.4	4	Gabriel Murphy	19	26	45		
Yards per game	440.7	378.2	Austin Aune	71	297	4.2	2	Dion Novil	23	22	45			
Returns				Rushing										
Kickoffs	20.1	19.7												