

SCARLETSPORTS

PREVIEWS AND RECAPS OF VARSITY AND INTRAMURAL ATHLETICS



The Fly Guys

The history of sports is filled with famous pairings: Maris and Mantle, Ali and Frazier, Borg and McEnroe. Add Scarlet Knights receivers Tiquan Underwood and Kenny Britt. The two combined for more than 2,300 receiving yards last year—tops in Rutgers history and the first time that two Big East Conference players from the same team each had 1,000 receiving

yards in one season. Yet, the dynamic duo is determined to top that in 2008. They will have to, given the loss of firepower with Ray Rice's departure. "We don't want to settle for anything less than a BCS Bowl and a Big East Conference championship," says Underwood (left), a 6-2, 180-pound senior. Adds Britt, a 6-4, 205-pound junior: ▶▶▶

The Fly Guys

▶▶ “Our chemistry with Mike Teel, one of the best college quarterbacks, is only going to get better.”

The feelings that bind their relationship extend to their teammates and coaches. “We practice, lift weights, eat, study, and hang out together,” says Britt, pointing out

2006, make the adjustment from Bayonne High School to Rutgers. Although they had eyes on the same position, Underwood encouraged and helped Britt. “Ti’s all about team. He’s a leader who sets the tone.” During Underwood’s first season, in 2005, the standout from Notre Dame High School in Lawrenceville saw spot duty as a kick returner and running back

who would take the snap out of the shotgun formation. In 2006, he got the nod after receiver Shawn Tucker broke his ankle in the fourth game. In the triple-overtime loss against West Virginia in the final game, Underwood had three catches for 39 yards before breaking his leg. Sidelined for the 37–10 win over Kansas State in the Texas Bowl, he returned in 2007 with 248 receiving yards on 10 catches in the opener against Buffalo—a single-game Rutgers record. He finished the year with 1,100 yards on 65 receptions.

Britt’s potential was clear midway through his freshman season. Starting

against Pittsburgh, he made at least two catches in each of the next six games, including the memorable 67-yard catch that set up a touchdown in the third quarter, leading to Rutgers’ dramatic win over Louisville in 2006. Last year, he was the Scarlet Knights go-to guy, with a school-record 1,232 yards on 62 receptions for eight touchdowns.

Huge wins over third-ranked Louisville in 2006 and second-ranked South Florida in 2007 put the Scarlet Knights in the national spotlight. Underwood and Britt’s role in the passing game will determine whether the team feels that warm glow again.



Kenny Britt, left, and Tiquan Underwood combined for more than 2,300 yards last season, a Rutgers record.

it’s been a steady diet of strength conditioning and watching game film, which helps the two read defensive formations and run better pass routes. On the field, both are lightning fast, able to slip past defensive backs to gain big yardage after catches. The crafty Underwood has a special knack for finding “seams” in defenses’ zone pass coverages. Britt uses his height to ward off defensive backs on the long throws and for passes over the middle. Off the field, “Ti is more laid back than I am; he’s Mr. Smooth,” says Britt. “I’m more outgoing, impulsive.”

The two first connected when Underwood helped Britt, a freshman in

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