UCF Players Going Pro

Four players from UCF were blessed to walk across the stage in Arlington, Texas in the 2018 NFL Draft. These undefeated national champions now have the opportunity to continue on their football careers.

Mike Hughes was drafted by the Minnesota Vikings in the first round, with the 30th pick. The cornerback was named on to the American Athletic Conference first team. Last season, he returned 20 kicks for an average of 31.8 yards and recorded two touchdowns. He returned 14 punts for an average of 16.6 yards and recorded one touchdown. Hughes had 37 solo tackles, 11 pass breakups, 4 interceptions, and returned one interception for a touchdown.

The New Orleans Saints selected Tre’Quan Smith in the third round with the 91st pick. Smith put himself in the top ten of several categories for UCF’s program history. He is second in single-season touchdown receptions (13), second in career 100-yard receiving games (11), third in career touchdown receptions (22), third in career receiving yards (2,748), fifth in average yards per catch in a season (19.8), tied for fifth in career receptions (168), and eighth in career yards per receptions (16.4) in program history. He was selected on to the 2017 American Athletic Conference second team.

Jordan Akins was drafted in the third round by the Houston Texans with the 98th pick. Akins was selected to the 2017 American Athletic Conference First Team along with Mike Hughes. The tight end recorded career highs in yards (515), touchdowns (4), and catches (32) in a season. He averaged 16.1 yards per reception and 42.9 yards per game.

Shaquem Griffin was selected in the fifth round to the Seattle Seahawks. Griffin is a two time all-AAC first team selection (2016,2017). For his senior year, he was the Chickfila Peach Bowl Defensive MVP, the 2018 Uplifting Athletes Rare disease champion awardee, and earned ESPN all-bowl team honors. He was third on the team with 74 tackles. For his junior season, he was the 2016 AAC Defensive Player of the Year. He led the team with 20.0 tackles for loss, which is tied for third most in a single season in UCF history. He was ranked 12 in the nation in sacks, and 13th in the nation in tackles for loss. Shaquem will be joining his twin brother, Shaquill Griffin, in Seattle. Shaquill Griffin also played for UCF and has finished his rookie season in the NFL.