

Lynch, Murrell make the grade

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Two former Appalachian State football players have made the grade and will play in the National Football League this fall.

Corey Lynch and Marcus Murrell both survived cutdown day with their respective teams on Saturday. Murrell, who was signed by the New England Patriots as a free agent last spring, made the grade with Pats coach Bill Belichick.

Murrell, a four-year pro, is playing with his third NFL team. He was originally signed by the Philadelphia Eagles as a free agent. He played with the New York Jets last season.

Murrell, a banking and finance major at ASU, had 11 tackles and a quarterback sack in four pre-season games with the Pats. New England kicks-off the season September 12 at home with Cincinnati.

Lynch solidified his case with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers by turning in a very strong pre-season. Lynch finished the preseason with 12 tackles, two interceptions, three passes defended, one quarterback pressure, one special teams tackle and one blocked punt. He even saved his best performance for last, leading the Bucs to a 24-17 win in the preseason finale at Houston with two interceptions, one of which he returned 91 yards for a touchdown.

Lynch helped the Mountaineers win three consecutive national titles. He also became nationally known from ASU's 2007 win at Michigan, when he blocked a field goal attempt to seal a 34-32 decision. He had 24 career interceptions (a Southern Conference record) and had 52 passes defended (an FCS record) He was also ASU's first three-time All-American since LB Dexter Coakley.

The Bucs begin the season at home against Cleveland on September 12.