

ASU Football Inks 19 to National Letters of Intent

Written by Mike Flynn

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Nineteen student-athletes signed National Letters of Intent on Wednesday to join Appalachian State University's football program in 2011.

The nineteen signees — 18 high-school seniors and one junior-college transfer — will arrive at Appalachian in the summer. The group includes: defensive back Henry Barnes (Newton Grove, N.C./Hobbton), wide receiver Bobo Beathard (Haymarket, Va./Battlefield), defensive end Ronald Blair (Greensboro, Ga./Greene County), defensive end Thomas Bronson (Brooksville, Fla./Hernando), quarterback Kameron Bryant (Cary, N.C./Panther Creek), defensive tackle Stephen Burns (Taylorsville, N.C./Alexander Central), offensive lineman Shaq Counts (Irmo, S.C./Irmo), offensive lineman Derek Evans (Alcoa, Tenn./Alcoa), defensive tackle Davante Harris (Blythewood, S.C./Blythewood), offensive lineman Ron Henderson (Greenville, S.C./Berea), place kicker Zach Matics (Jacksonville, N.C./Southwest-Onslow), linebacker Brandon McGowan (Suwannee, Ga./North Gwinnett), defensive back Doug Middleton (Winston-Salem, N.C./Parkland), running back Steven Miller (Piscataway, N.J./Piscataway/Nassau C.C.), wide receiver Sean Price (Reston, Va./South Lakes), defensive end James Robinson (Blythewood, S.C./Blythewood), defensive back Joel Ross (Damascus, Md./Damascus), running back Darius Smith (Reston, Va./South Lakes) and linebacker Jamal Ware (Tyrone, Ga./Sandy Creek).

“Like every coach in the country, I’m sure, I feel like we have signed an exceptional class,” ASU head coach Jerry Moore said. “We knew early what our needs were across the board and I feel like we addressed all of those needs with terrific football players. But, even more importantly, I feel like this is a quality group of young men that will represent our football program and our University well both on and off the field.”

HENRY BARNES

DB • 6-2 • 195 • Newton Grove, N.C./Hobbton

Helped lead Hobbton to North Carolina 1A state championship game and 10-5 overall record in 2010 ... versatile athlete played defensive back, running back and punted for the Wildcats ... averaged seven tackles per game and intercepted three passes as a senior while also rushing for 1,500 yards and seven touchdowns and averaging 38 yards per punt ... named all-Cape Fear region by Fayetteville Observer ... participated in 2010 North Carolina-South Carolina Shrine Bowl ... coached by Jeff Byrd.

BOBO BEATHARD

WR • 5-10 • 175 • Haymarket, Va./Battlefield

Named the 2010 Prince William County News & Messenger Prep Football Player of the Year ... helped lead Haymarket to the Virginia AAA Division 6 state championship and a 13-2 overall record as a senior in 2010 ... caught 28 passes as a senior with 18 of the receptions coming in five postseason games ... averaged 14.7 yards per catch on the season with eight of his 28

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receptions going for touchdowns ... also rushed for 385 yards and returned two punts for touchdowns ... versatile athlete earned second-team all-region accolades at wide receiver and first-team honors as a defensive back ... coached by Mark Cox ... father, Jeff Beathard, is a scout for the Carolina Panthers ... grandfather, Bobby Beathard, is the former general manager of the Washington Redskins and San Diego Chargers and also served as a scout for the Kansas City Chiefs and Atlanta Falcons and director of player personnel for the Miami Dolphins during his 38 years in the NFL ... teams he worked for appeared in seven Super Bowls, winning four.

RONALD BLAIR

DE • 6-4 • 260 • Greensboro, Ga./Greene County

Named the 2010 Georgia Region 4-AA Defensive Player of the Year ... earned second-team all-state recognition from the Associated Press ... all-region performer ... recorded 112 tackles, nine sacks, 12 quarterback hurries, a fumble recovery and an interception that he returned 70 yards for a touchdown as a senior ... coached by Charles Ninslette.

THOMAS BRONSON

DE • 6-3 • 235 • Brooksville, Fla./Hernando

Rated as a two-star prospect by Rivals.com ... named the 2010 St. Petersburg Times North Suncoast Defensive Player of the Year ... in his only season as a defensive end, recorded 83 tackles, 47 tackles for loss, 14 sacks, six forced fumbles and a fumble recovery as a senior ... played linebacker as a junior but was not at 100 percent for the majority of the season after losing 20 pounds due to illness ... led a Leopard defense that surrendered just 10 points per game and shut out three of its 11 opponents in 2010 ... led Hernando to a 9-2 overall record and first postseason berth in five years as a senior ... coached by John Palmer.

KAMERON BRYANT

QB • 6-2 • 195 • Cary, N.C./Panther Creek

Earned 2010 first-team all-Tri-Nine Conference recognition ... completed nearly 62 percent of his passes for 2,530 yards and 26 touchdowns with only eight interceptions and also ran for over 400 yards as a senior ... helped lead Panther Creek to North Carolina 4-AA state semifinals ... completed 25-of-38 passes for 382 yards and six touchdowns in district playoff win over rival Fuquay-Varina ... heady signal-caller played in three different offensive systems in three seasons, going from a run-oriented spread attack as a sophomore at Green Hope H.S. to a pass-oriented spread as a junior at Panther Creek before the Catamounts switched to a pro-style offense for his final campaign ... boasts a 4.0+ grade point average ... coached by Wayne Bragg.

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STEPHEN BURNS

DT • 6-2 • 265 • Taylorsville, N.C./Alexander Central

Local product was named 2010 Hickory Daily Record Defensive Player of the Year ... also earned first-team all-Charlotte Observer recognition ... led Alexander Central with 50 tackles, 20 tackles for loss and 11 sacks as a senior ... also forced a fumble and blocked two kicks in final prep campaign ... notched 38 tackles, eight TFL, three sacks and two fumble recoveries as a junior in 2009 ... helped lead Alexander Central to the Northwestern 3A-4A Conference championship as a senior in 2010 ... coached by Tom Harper ... was also 4A regional champion and state quarterfinalist as a 285-pound wrestler as a junior.

SHAQ COUNTS

OL • 6-2 • 275 • Irmo, S.C./Irmo

Rated as a two-star prospect by Scout.com ... earned all-state and all-region recognition as a senior ... helped pave the way for an Irmo offense that averaged 237 rushing yards per game and 7.9 yards per carry in 2010 ... participated in 2010 North Carolina-South Carolina Shrine Bowl ... helped lead Irmo to 2010 South Carolina 4A state semifinals ... coached by Bob Hanna.

DEREK EVANS

OL • 6-2 • 275 • Alcoa, Tenn./Alcoa

A 2010 Tennessee 2A all-state honoree ... one of three finalists for 2010 Tennessee Class AA Mr. Football Lineman of the Year award ... two-time all-county and all-district selection ... helped lead Alcoa to state championships and a 44-1 overall record in three years as a starter ... helped pave the way for an offense that averaged 46.1 points per game and 13.9 yards per rush as a senior ... participated in 2010 Tennessee East vs. West All-Star Classic ... coached by Gary Rankin.

DAVANTE HARRIS

DT • 6-6 • 250 • Blythewood, S.C./Blythewood

Recorded 40 tackles, eight tackles for loss, two sacks and 11 quarterback hurries as a senior ... high-school teammate of fellow ASU newcomer James Robinson ... coached by Jeremy Saitz.

RON HENDERSON

OL • 6-4 • 265 • Greenville, S.C./Berea

A first-team all-Greenville County and South Carolina all-Region II-3A selection ... was a standout performer on both offense and defense as a prep ... helped lead Berea to a S.C. 3A state playoffs appearance and 7-4 overall record in 2010 ... coached by Bryan Davis.

ZACH MATICS

PK • 6-2 • 180 • Jacksonville, N.C./Southwest-Onslow

Earned 2010 first-team all-state recognition from the Associated Press ... also earned first-team all-area recognition and was the Coastal Plains 1-A Conference Special Teams Player of the Year as a senior ... made 13-of-19 field goals (including two 51-yarders) and 72-of-74 extra points as a senior ... led North Carolina in kick scoring in 2010 with 110 points ... also recorded touchbacks on 84-of-107 kickoffs as a senior ... coached by Phil Padgett.

BRANDON McGOWAN

LB • 6-3 • 210 • Suwanee, Ga./North Gwinnett

Rated as a three-star prospect by Rivals.com ... recorded 71 tackles and 5.5 sacks as a senior ... helped lead North Gwinnett to a perfect 11-0 regular season and the Georgia Region 7-5A championship in 2010 ... earned second-team all-region recognition ... coached by Bob Sphire.

DOUG MIDDLETON

DB • 6-1 • 185 • Winston-Salem, N.C./Parkland

Rated as a two-star prospect by Rivals.com ... four-year starter ... two-time all-conference selection ... earned all-Forsyth County recognition as a freshman ... led Forsyth County with six interceptions as a sophomore and led Winston-Salem with 102 tackles as a senior ... finished career with 13 interceptions, more than 200 tackles and over a dozen pass break-ups ... also excelled as a kick returner with 300 return yards and three touchdowns as a senior ... named best defensive back at Under Armour scouting combine in Charlotte ... coached by DeAngelo Bell ... is also an all-conference performer in track, qualifying for the 2010 North Carolina state championship meet in the 55m (6.3 seconds).

STEVEN MILLER

RB • 5-9 • 180 • Piscataway, N.J./Piscataway (Nassau C.C.)

2010 National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) first-team all-American ... also named 2010 Northeast Conference Player of the Year and Offensive Player of the Year ... led Northeast Conference with 1,180 rushing yards, 12 rushing touchdowns and 7.4 yards per carry as a sophomore in 2010 ... also hauled in 25 receiving yards to finish fourth in league with 939 all-purpose yards ... led Nassau to a perfect 11-0 record and the 2010 Northeast Conference championship ... coached at Nassau by Germaine Miles ... played as a prep at Piscataway (N.J.) H.S., a school that has produced three first-round NFL Draft picks in the last two years, including his cousin, New Orleans Saints defensive back Malcolm Jenkins ... helped lead Piscataway to 2008 North Jersey, Section 2, Group 4 championship ... rushed for over 1,300 yards and 20 touchdowns as a senior, including 206 yards on 25 carries (8.2 average) in state title game ... coached at Piscataway by Dan Higgins.

SEAN PRICE

WR • 6-5 • 200 • Reston, Va./South Lakes

Caught 49 passes for 820 yards and eight touchdowns and ran 14 times for 275 yards and four scores as a senior ... teamed with fellow Mountaineer newcomer Darius Smith to lead South Lakes to an 8-4 record and appearance in Virginia AAA playoffs in 2010 ... played just two years of high-school football ... coached by Andy Hill ... is perhaps better known as a track standout, earning all-Washington D.C. Metropolitan Area recognition as a junior after winning district and regional championships in the triple (46-8.5) and long (21-11.75) jumps.

JAMES ROBINSON DE • 6-5 • 235 • Blythewood, S.C./Blythewood

Led team with 67 tackles and four sacks as a senior ... high-school teammate of fellow ASU newcomer Davante Harris ... coached by Jeremy Saitz ... is a member of Blythewood's Army ROTC (captain/company commander).

JOEL ROSS

DB • 5-10 • 170 • Damascus, Md./Damascus

Played both wide receiver and defensive back as a prep ... caught 21 passes for 330 yards and four touchdowns as a senior, including a five-catch, 146-yard, two-touchdown effort in a 27-23 win over Quince Orchard ... helped lead Damascus to an undefeated regular season and Maryland 3A state semifinals in 2010 ... named team's offensive MVP in as a senior ... participated in 2010 Maryland Crab Bowl all-star game ... coached by Eric Wallich.

DARIUS SMITH

RB • 5-11 • 170 • Reston, Va./South Lakes

Versatile athlete played running back, wide receiver and defensive back as a prep ... as a senior, accounted for 845 yards (478 receiving, 367 rushing) and nine touchdowns (seven receiving, two rushing) on offense and was named an honorable-mention all-Washington D.C. Metropolitan Area selection as a defensive back ... was perhaps most dangerous as a kick returner, taking five of 16 kicks that he fielded back for touchdowns (four punts, one kickoff) ... teamed with fellow Mountaineer newcomer Sean Price to lead South Lakes to an 8-4 record and appearance in Virginia AAA playoffs in 2010 ... coached by Andy Hill.

JAMAL WARE

LB • 6-1 • 205 • Tyrone, Ga./Sandy Creek

First-team all-state, all-region and all-county honoree ... named 2010 Georgia Region 3-3A Defensive Player of the Year ... recorded 130 tackles (93 solo) as a senior ... also notched five

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sacks, 12 tackles for loss and two interceptions as a senior in 2010 ... registered 84 tackles, 21 TFL and 10 sacks as a junior ... helped lead team to state championships in both years as a starter ... coached by Chip Walker.