

ASU SPRING PRACTICE BEGINS FEB. 21

Written by Mike Flynn
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Appalachian State University football will conduct its NCAA-allowed 15 spring practices between Monday, Feb. 21-Wednesday, March 23, head coach Jerry Moore has announced.

Appalachian will practice four times a week during the weeks of Feb. 21-25, Feb. 28-March 4 and March 14-18, taking a week off for spring break (March 7-11). The spring season will conclude with three practices from March 21-23. ASU will put an unofficial wrap on the spring when it holds its 2010 Southern Conference championship banquet on Saturday, March 26 at the Holmes Center.

Primary focuses for the Mountaineers this spring include beginning the process of finding replacements for five starters on offense — including three all-conference linemen — and four starters on defense, highlighted by the departures of 2010 Buck Buchanan Award finalists Jabari Fletcher, Mark LeGree and D.J. Smith.

As is customary, Appalachian will be without a handful of key contributors during spring drills as they continue to rehabilitate injuries suffered during the 2010 campaign. Among those expected to sit out this spring are offensive lineman Kalan Jones (back), tight end Ben Jordan (shoulder), defensive back Dominique McDuffie (knee) and linebacker Cougar Norris (ankle). Quarterback Kalik Barnes (shoulder), defensive back Michael Frazier (knee), offensive lineman Matt Ruff (neck) and defensive lineman Anthony Wilson (knee) will likely participate in some spring drills but will be limited due to their lingering ailments. All of the injured players are expected to be at 100 percent when the Mountaineers open preparations for the 2011 season in earnest in August.

The spring will also mark the return of a handful of players that missed much or all of the 2010 campaign due to injuries, including defensive end Lanston Tanyi (toe) and tight end Trevor Sawyer (shoulder). Additionally, offensive lineman Graham Fisher (foot), who did not participate with the program due to injury last fall, will make his Black-and-Gold debut this spring.

Due to the fact that the majority of drills are expected to be held in the Sofield Family Indoor Practice Facility, spring practices are not open to the public. Like in past years, ASU will not conduct a spring game due to a shortage of healthy players at some positions and the coaching staff's desire to hold practices on all 15 days that are permitted by the NCAA. Periodic reports from the practice field will be available at GoASU.com.

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