

Coakley Selected for Induction to SoCon Hall of Fame

Written by Mike Flynn

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Former Appalachian State University linebacker Dexter Coakley, perhaps the most decorated defensive player in NCAA Division I FCS

(Football Championship Subdivision — formerly Division I-AA) history, has been selected for induction into the Southern Conference Hall of Fame. Coakley and five other members of the SoCon Hall of Fame's third class will be enshrined on May 24 in Charleston, S.C. Coakley starred as a linebacker at Appalachian from 1993-96 and remains the school's all-time leader in tackles (616), total tackles (616), solo tackles (350), assisted tackles (266), double-figure tackle games (37) and 20-tackle games (7). He was the 1993 SoCon Freshman of the Year, a three-time SoCon Defensive Player of the Year (1994-96 — still the only three-time recipient of the award), a two-time SoCon Male Athlete of the Year (1995-96 and 1996-97), a three-time All-American (one of only two three-time consensus first-team All-Americans in ASU history) and the winner of the first two Buck Buchanan Awards (1995 and '96). He remains the only two-time winner of the Buchanan Award, which is presented annually to the nation's top FCS defensive player.

Coakley graduated from ASU in 1997 with a B.S. in communications and was selected by the Dallas Cowboys in the third round (65th overall pick) of that year's National Football League Draft. He went on to enjoy a 10-year NFL career, playing eight seasons in Dallas and two with the St. Louis Rams. He was selected to play in three Pro Bowls (1999, 2001 and 2003) and, in 10 pro seasons, totaled 687 tackles and 10 interceptions and missed just one game due to injury.

One of only four players in Appalachian football history to have his jersey number retired (ASU retired his No. 32 in 2005), Coakley will also be considered for induction to the College Football Hall of Fame this summer.

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He currently resides in the Dallas area with his wife, Nicole, and children, Trinity and Zahn.

Coakley will be the fourth former Mountaineer inducted into the SoCon Hall of Fame, joining women's basketball standout Valorie Whiteside and track and field stars Mary Jayne Harrelson and Melissa Morrison Howard. Joining Coakley in this year's class of inductees are Lefty Driesell (men's basketball coach — Davidson), Regina Kirk (women's basketball — Chattanooga), General Robert Neyland (football coach — Tennessee), Vic Seixas (men's tennis — North Carolina) and Shannon Wommack (women's cross country/track and field — Chattanooga).

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