Troy Sanders (Chester, S.C./Chester) intercepted a pass at the Appalachian State University five yard line as time expired and the 12th-ranked Mountaineers clinched their record-tying 12th Southern Conference championship with a 33-28 triumph

over Furman on Saturday at Kidd Brewer Stadium.

"It's our championship," said ASU coach Jerry Moore. "These championships go to all of our players that have gone through this program year after year. I really enjoy seeing our players, our students and our fans celebrating after the game on the field. It's special."

Appalachian State (8-3, 6-2 SoCon) led 27-14 at halftime, but Furman (3-7, 2-5 SoCon) scored two touchdowns in an 18-second span early in the third quarter to take a 28-27 lead. However, buoyed by a defense that allowed only one touchdown all afternoon and two second-half field goals from Sam Martin (Fayetteville, Ga./Starr's Mill), the Mountaineers took a 33-28 lead with 6:04 left in the ballgame.

"We were tested again," Moore said. "And things like that tell you what kind of players and what kind of program you have. But our players are so resilent. That's what makes them so special. We didhn't have a pity party after that loss to Wofford. Instead, our players rolled up their sleeves and went to work. These guys may be young, but their eager to learn, and they want to get better."

Appalachian's defense forced a third-straight Furman punt with 3:50 to go but the Mountaineers managed only one first down on their ensuing possession and had to punt back to the Paladins with 1:57 remaining on the clock.

A 62-yard punt by Martin pinned Furman at its own one yard line but the Paladins clawed their way out of the shadow of their goal post and, thanks to third-down and fourth-down conversions on the series, drove all the way to the App State 42, with six seconds to go. However, FU's hail-mary pass attempt was picked off by Sanders at the five yard line and the senior co-captain slid to the ground as the clock hit 0:00, setting off a wild on-field celebration that included many of the 28,986 fans in attendance for the title-clinching triumph.

"We had a tendency to beat the big teams like Georgia Southern last week, and then we look at the next team as if they aren't that good," said running back Steven Miller. "But today, we played (Furman) like they were Georgia Southern. We overcame our problems today. We kept our poise. I knew we were going to win this game."

Appalachian dominated the action for much of the afternoon, but surrendered three non-offensive touchdowns on a 100-yard kickoff return and a pair of fumble recoveries that allowed Furman to stay in the game. The Mountaineers outgained the Paladins, 488-300, and also held significant statistical advantages in first downs (27-16), rushing yards (149-97), passing yards (339-203), third-down conversions (6 of 15-5 of 14) and time of possession (32:58-27:02).

The Mountaineers took leads of 10-0 and 17-7 in the first 20 minutes of the ballgame but each time, Furman responded with non-offensive touchdowns that cut the Appalachian advantage back to three points — first on Jerodis Williams' second 100-yard kickoff return of the season and later when Gary Wilkins recovered a Jamal Jackson (Atlanta, Ga./North Atlanta) fumble in the end zone.

Appalachian regained control by scoring the final 10 points of the opening half, capped by Andrew Peacock's (Durham, N.C./Northern Durham) 18-yard touchdown catch with 24 seconds to go in the half that gave the Mountaineers the seemingly commanding 13-point lead at the break.

However, before many fans were settled back into their seats for the second half, the lead evaporated. Furman took the opening kickoff after halftime and marched 75 yards in 10 plays to score its only offensive touchdown of the game on a 10 yard pass from Reese Hannon to Jordan Snellings that cut the Mountaineers' advantage to 27-21. Then, on the first play of the ensuing series, Appalachian's Tony Washington (High Point, N.C./T.W. Andrews) fumbled after a short gain and the loose ball was scooped up by FU's Carl Rider, who scampered 27 yards for a touchdown that gave the Paladins a shocking 28-27 lead.

Appalachian responded by driving all the way to the Furman one yard line on its next possession but had to settle for a 19-yard field goal by Martin that gave the Mountaineers the lead for good at 30-28 with 5:37 to go in the third quarter.

From there, Appalachian State's defense rose to the occasion, limiting Furman to just 52 yards over its next four possessions. The four-series dominance began with an interception by Demetrius McCray (Covington, Ga./Newton) and was capped by three-straight punts that allowed the Mountaineers to stetch the lead to 33-28 on Martin's fourth and final field goal of the day and set up the heart-stopping finish.

"I thought we had a good game plan today on defense," linebacker Jeremy Kimbrough said. "We gave up one bad drive, but I really felt we shut them down. And we did a great job shutting (Jerodis) Williams down. He got me early and opened my eyes, but we made the right adjustments against him."

Offensively, Appalachian was led by Peacock, who set career highs with 11 receptions and 130 receiving yards and also threw a seven-yard touchdown to Drew Bailey (Spartanburg, S.C./Dorman) on the first pass attempt of his career, which came on a reverse option early in the second quarter. He almost added a touchdown run to the scoring pass and catch but a would-be seven-yard touchdown run in the fourth quarter was negated by a holding penalty.

Freshman Sean Price (Reston, Va./South Lakes) also surpassed the 100-yard receiving mark, finishing with 115 yards on 10 catches to give Appalachian two 100-yard receivers in a game for only the fourth time in school history.

Jackson finished with 332 yards on 32-of-46 passing, making him just the fourth passer in Appalachian's all-time annals with back-to-back 300-yard performances.

Defensively, Kimbrough (Decatur, Ga./Cedar Grove) led the way with a career-high 17 tackles. Sanders chipped in with seven tackles, a pass breakup and the game-ending interception while Patrick Blalock (Asheville, N.C./A.C. Reynolds) added six stops, a tackle for loss, a forced fumble and a fumble recovery.

"I knew coming ind, this was going to be a great group," Kimbrough said. "These guys are unbelievable. We've gone through some tough times, but we've kept our composure all year. And that's how you get a conference championship."

Appalachian, which is idle for the final week of the regular season, will learn its postseason fate next Sunday, Nov. 18 when the 20-team NCAA Division I Football Championship bracket is unveiled at 1:30 p.m. on ESPNU.

"Having some time off will be beneficial," Moore said. "We've been at it since August 3rd, and the only day off between then and now, was the Friday before the East Carolina game (on September 1). It's been bang, bang, bang ever since. This time off will help. We're going to rest

some people up in the next week and try to get ready to play."
NOTES: Appalachian State shares the 2012 SoCon title with Georgia Southern (8-2, 6-2 SoCon) and Wofford (8-2, 6-2 SoCon) ... all three SoCon co-champions have wrapped up league play — GSU and Wofford close the regular season at Georgia and South Carolina, respectively, next week ... since the three squads are 1-1 against each other in head-to-head matchups, the winner of the league's automatic bid to the NCAA Division I Football Championship won't be determined until fourth place in the final SoCon standings is settled next Saturday ... regardless of who receives the automatic berth, all three SoCon co-champions are considered to be virtual locks for the 20-team playoff field ... Appalachian's 12th SoCon championship ties it with Furman for the most titles in the conference's 79-year history ... the Mountaineers' 12 titles have come in 41 seasons in the conference while Furman's have come in 74 years in the league ... Appalachian State is only the second program in SoCon history to win seven conference crowns in a span of eight years — Georgia Southern also accomplished the feat in 1997-2002, 2004 ... Appalachian moved to 12-2 all-time in games when it could clinch a SoCon title with a win ... the Mountaineers have won nine-straight potential SoCon championship-clinchers, dating back to 1995 ... Appalachian won for the 11th time in the last 14 games, 10th time in the last 12 games and seventh time in the last eight games versus Furman ... the Mountaineers have won nine-straight over Furman at home, with its last loss to the Paladins at Kidd Brewer Stadium coming in 1996 ... Price became the first freshman and sixth player overall in Appalachian State history with 1,000 receiving yards in a season, finishing the regular season with 1,029 ... he needs only 45 yards during the postseason to break the NCAA Division I FCS freshman record of 1,073, set by Marshall's Randy Moss in 1996.....With the victory, Appalachian State (8-3, 6-2 SoCon) won its seventh Southern Conference championship in the last eight years and 12th overall....Appalachian State's 12 Southern Conference championships tie the conference record previously held alone by Furman. Appalachian State's 12 SoCon championships have come in 41 seasons in the conference while Furman's have come in 74 years in the league....Appalachian State is also only the second program in SoCon history (dating to 1933) to win seven conference championships in a span of eight years (Georgia Southern – 1997-2002, 2004)....Appalachian State shares the 2012 SoCon championship with Georgia Southern (8-2, 6-2 SoCon) and Wofford (8-2, 6-2 SoCon). The tiebreaker for the league's automatic berth in the 2012 NCAA Division I Football Championship will not be determined until the battle for fourth place in the final SoCon standings is settled next Saturday....Regardless of whether Appalachian State receives the SoCon's automatic berth, the Mountaineers are considered a virtual lock for the 20-team NCAA Division I Football Championship field. The playoff participants and brackets will be unveiled on Sunday, November 18....Appalachian State moved to 12-2 all-time in games that it could clinch a Southern Conference championship with a win. The Mountaineers have won nine-straight potential SoCon championship-clinchers, dating back to 1995....Appalachian State won for the 11th time in the last 14 games, 10th time in the last 12 games and seventh time in the last eight games versus Furman (3-7, 2-5 SoCon)....Appalachian State has won nine-straight over Furman at home, with its last loss to the Paladins at Kidd Brewer Stadium coming in 1996....Appalachian State junior wide receiver Andrew Peacock set career highs with 11 receptions for 130 yards (previous career highs were eight receptions for 79 yards at Furman in 2011). Peacock, who had an 18-yard touchdown catch, also threw a seven-yard touchdown pass to tight end Drew Bailey on his first-career pass attempt, which came on a reverse option in the second quarter....Appalachian State freshman wide receiver Sean Price had 115 yards on

10 receptions, giving Appalachian State two 100-yard receivers in a game for only the fourth time in school history (Alvin Ray and Rick Beasley vs. VMI, 1979; Gerald Hardy and Frank Leatherwood vs. Liberty, 1997; Matt Cline and CoCo Hillary vs. Georgia Southern, 2009)....Appalachian State junior quarterback Jamal Jackson passed for 332 yards (32-of-46, 1 TD, 0 INT). He is only the fourth quarterback in Appalachian State history to pass for 300 yards in consecutive games (Armanti Edwards – Oct. 17 & 24, 2009; Richie Williams – Oct. 23 & 30, 2004; Bake Baker – Oct. 4 & Oct. 11, 1997).

Scoring Summary

Score by Quarters	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**Total**
Furman	7	7	14	0	28
Appalachian State	10	17	3	3	33

1st
11:02 APP - Sam Martin 27 yd field goal, 9-65 3:58 0 - 3
03:46 APP - Steven Miller 8 yd run (Sam Martin kick), 4-25 1:22 0 - 10
03:34 FUR - Jerodis Williams 100 yd kickoff return (Ray Early kick) 7 - 10
2nd
11:43 APP - Drew Bailey 7 yd pass from Andrew Peacock (Sam Martin kick), 5-48 1:57 7 - 17
08:26 FUR - Gary Wilkins 0 yd fumble recovery (Ray Early kick) 14 - 17
05:38 APP - Sam Martin 47 yd field goal, 9-45 2:48 14 - 20
00:24 APP - Andrew Peacock 18 yd pass from Jamal Jackson (Sam Martin kick), 10-80 2:26 14 - 27
3rd
09:28 FUR - Jordan Snellings 10 yd pass from Reese Hannon (Ray Early kick), 10-75 5:32 21 - 27
09:10 FUR - Carl Rider 27 yd fumble recovery (Ray Early kick) 28 - 27

05:37 APP - Sam Martin 19 yd field goal, 9-73 3:33 28 - 30
4th
06:04 APP - Sam Martin 32 yd field goal, 13-68 5:17 28 - 33

Team Statistics

FIRST DOWNS: ASU 27, FURMAN 16
RUSHING YARDS: ASU 149, FURMAN 97
PASSING YARDS: ASU 339, FURMAN 203
TOTAL YARDS: ASU 488, FURMAN 300
FUMBLES: NUMBER/LOST: ASU 2-2, FURMAN 1-1
TURNOVERS: ASU 2, FURMAN 3
PENALTY YARDS: ASU 4-23, FURMAN 7-55
TIME OF POSSESSION: ASU 32:58, FURMAN 27: 02
3RD DOWN CONVERSIONS: ASU 6-15, FURMAN 5-14
4TH DOWN CONVERSIONS: ASU 0-1, FURMAN 1-2

Individual Statistics

RUSHING
ASU: MILLER 25-170-TD
FURMAN: WILLIAMS 14-59

PASSING
ASU: JACKSON 32-46-332-TD
FURMAN: HANNON 19-36-203-2INT-TD

RECEIVING
ASU: PEACOCK 11-130-TD, PRICE 10-115
FURMAN: WILLIAMS 7-37, ANDERSON 4-59

Photo Courtesy: Jerry Moore and Mountaineers Raise Trophy, ASU Athletics