The Lenoir-Rhyne Football Team (8-2, 6-1) won the 2012 South Atlantic Conference Championship outright with a 44-14 victory over Catawba (4-7, 2-5) Saturday afternoon at Moretz Stadium. L-R, the top-ranked rushing team in NCAA Division

II, ran for 513 yards on the day en route to its seventh straight win and second consecutive league title.

Senior quarterback Reuben Haynes (Commerce, Ga.) led the way with a game-high 130 yards rushing and two touchdowns as the Bears won their fifth South Atlantic Conference Championship (1975, 1988, 1994, 2011 and 2012) in school history but first outright in 37 years.

Sophomore tailback Jarrod Spears (Bunnlevel, N.C.) returned a kickoff 95 yards for a score and added a rushing touchdown as Lenoir-Rhyne defeated Catawba for the fourth straight year.

L-R jumped ahead by a 14-0 score on second quarter rushing touchdowns of 34 and 53 yards by junior halfback Graham Duncan (Gainesville, Ga.) and Haynes, respectively.

Catawba quarterback B.J. Sherrill (Cleveland, N.C.) scored the first of two rushing touchdowns on a one-yard run with 41 seconds left before intermission but L-R took back control when Spears returned the ensuing kickoff for a touchdown to give the Bears a 20-7 advantage at the break.

From there, Lenoir-Rhyne broke the game open by scoring the first 17 points of the second half capped off by a one-yard run by Haynes with 10:42 remaining in the contest.

Duncan added 94 yards on the ground while senior linebacker Demetrius Green (Cedartown, Ga.) finished with a team-high eight takedowns as the Bears limited the Indians to just 229 yards of total offense including 55 on the ground.

For Catawba, Sherrill passed for 174 yards while Ed Robinson (Callahan, Fla.) led all tacklers with 11 despite the loss.

Lenoir-Rhyne now awaits for a berth to NCAA Division II Playoffs, the first postseason berth for the Bears in 50 years. The national playoffs will be announced on Sunday at 5:00 p.m.

Photo Courtesy: Jarrod Spears, L-R Athletics