The NCAA Football Championship Series announced its 20-team playoff field Sunday afternoon. And Appalachian State (8-3), which finished in a three-way tie with Georgia Southern and

Wofford for first place in the Southern Conference standings, will open the playoffs at home with a second-round match up against Illinois State at Kidd Brewer Stadium on Saturday December 1.

The Redbirds (8-3), who finished in a three-way tie for third place with Indiana State and Southern Illinois in the Missouri Valley Conference, are led by senior running back Darrelynn Dunn, who ran for 850 yards and 12 touchdowns, senior quarterback Matt Brown, who completed 225 passes in 359 attempts for 2,676 yards, 20 TDs and 10 interceptions; and senior wide receiver Tyrone Walker, who caught 71 passes for 995 yards and six TDs.

The Redbirds are averaging 136 yards on the ground and 384 yards a game offensively.

Defensively, the Redbirds are led by senior linebacker Mike Zimmer, who has made 109 tackles this season, including 50 solo stops; junior defensive lineman Colton Underwood, who leads ISU with 18 tackles-for-loss and 9.5 quarterback sacks; and senior safety Ben Ericksen, who has seven interceptions.

ISU is giving up an average of 135 yards on the ground, and the Redbirds give up an average of 311 yards a game. They are also plus eight in turnover ratio, and they've been penalized 80 times for 718 yards. Their opponents committed 69 penalties for 574 yards.

The only blemish against ISU is that two of their losses came against Southern Illinois, which was 6-5, and Missouri State, which was 3-8.

ASU and ISU also find themselves in the same bracket with the No.2 seed Eastern Washington, which won the national title two years ago. EWU receives a first-round bye and will play the winner of Colgate and Wagner in the second round on December 1. The Mountaineers or the Redbirds would play EWU on December 8 in the national quarterfinals.

Defending champion North Dakota State received the top seed. Eastern Washington, Montana State, Old Dominion and Georgia Southern round out the top five seeds in the field. Georgia Southern, which received an automatic berth in the Southern Conference when The Citadel defeated Furman on Saturday, is paired up with Old Dominion, the No.4 seed. The Eagles (8-3) take on Central Arkansas, a team that features a very strong passing game, in a second-round game on December 1 in Statesboro, GA.

Wofford is the third and final team to make the FCS Playoffs from the Southern Conference. The Terriers (8-3), led by running back and Watauga County native Eric Breitenstein, takes on New Hampshire in the second round in Spartanburg, S.C., on December 1. Wofford is paired up with the top seed, North Dakota State, who they would meet in the national quarterfinals on December 8, if they advance.

FCS PLAYOFF SCHEDULE

FIRST ROUND GAMES
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 24
EASTERN ILLINOIS (7-4) @ SOUTH DAKOTA STATE (8-3)
COASTAL CAROLINA (7-4) @ BETHUNE COOKMAN (9-2)
VILLANOVA (8-3) @ STONEY BROOK (9-2)
COLGATE (8-3) @ WAGNER (8-3)

SECOND ROUND GAMES
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1
EIU-SDSU WINNER @ No.1 NORTH DAKOTA STATE (10-1)
NEW HAMPSHIRE (8-3) @ WOFFORD (8-3)
CENTRAL ARKANSAS (9-2) @ No.5 GEORGIA SOUTHERN (8-3)
BETHUNE COOKMAN-COASTAL WINNER @ NO.4 OLD DOMINION (10-1)
STONEY BROOK-VILLANOVA WINNER @ No.3 MONTANA STATE (10-1)
CAL POLY (9-2) @ SAM HOUSTON STATE (8-3)
ILLINOIS STATE (8-3) @ APPALACHIAN STATE (8-3)
COLGATE-WAGNER WINNER @ No.2 EASTERN WASHINGTON (9-2)

NATIONAL QUARTERFINALS
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8

NATIONAL SEMIFINALS
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 14
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15

NATIONAL FINALS
FRISCO, TX
SATURDAY, JANUARY 5

Photo Courtesy: Jamal Jackson, ASU Athletics