The Lenoir-Rhyne University Football Team finished its record-breaking 2012 season ranked No. 20 in the final AFCA NCAA Division II National Top 25 Coaches Poll. AFCA is the American Football Coaches Association. Lenoir-Rhyne ended the

season with a 9-3 overall record and a 6-1 mark in the South Atlantic Conference. L-R earned a berth to the postseason for the first time in 50 years this fall and advanced to the second round of the NCAA Division II Playoffs before falling to Carson-Newman by a 38-35 score in Jefferson City, Tenn.

In addition, Lenoir-Rhyne won its first postseason contest since 1962 with its 21-6 triumph over Fort Valley State in the opening round of the playoffs on Saturday, November 17, in Hickory, N.C.

The Bears also won their second consecutive SAC Championship in 2012 and first outright league title in 37 years under second-year mentor Mike Houston.

Lenoir-Rhyne's nine wins this fall were the team's most victories in a single season since an 11-1 ledger in 1962. The Bears also put together in eight-game winning streak this year.

Valdosta State (Ga.) (12-2) earned the top spot in the poll after defeating Winston-Salem State (14-1) in the 2012 NCAA Division II National Championship game this past Saturday, 35-7, in Florence, Ala.

2012 AFCA NCAA Division II
Top 25 Coaches Final Poll
December 17, 2012

1. Valdosta State (Ga.) (30) 12-2
2. Winston-Salem State (N.C.) 14-1
3. Minnesota State-Mankato 13-1
4. West Texas A&M 12-3
5. Missouri Western State 12-2
6. Colorado State-Pueblo 12-1
7. Indiana (Pa.) 12-2
8. New Haven (Conn.) 10-1
9. Ashland (Ohio) 11-1
10. Northwest Missouri State 10-3
11. Henderson State (Ark.) 10-1
12. Minnesota-Duluth 10-2
13. Carson-Newman (Tenn.) 9-3
14. Shippensburg (Pa.) 11-2

15. Indianapolis (Ind.) 10-3
16. Midwestern State (Texas) 9-2
17. Bloomsburg (Pa.) 10-2
18. Chadron State (Neb.) 9-3
19. Harding (Ark.) 9-2
20. Lenoir-Rhyne (N.C.) 9-3
21. West Alabama 9-4
23. Tuskegee (Ala.) 10-2
24. Missouri S&T 10-1
25. Shepherd (W.Va.) 8-3

Others Receiving Votes: Miles (Ala.), 69; Sioux Falls (S.D.), 68; Winona St. (Minn.), 47; Fort Valley St. (Ga.), 22; Charleston (W.Va.), 20; Saginaw Valley St. (Mich.), 12; Grand Valley St. (Mich.), 10; Michigan Tech, 9; California (Pa.), 5; Bentley (Mass.), 4.

Photo Courtesy: Reuben Haynes, L-R Athletics