After returning to the Southern Conference semifinals for the third consecutive season, Appalachian State University men's soccer head coach Matt Nelson has

announced the signing of eight recruits that will join the Mountaineers for the 2013 season.
The incoming class includes Jackson Allen (Fairview, N.C./Asheville), Simon Burke (Raleigh, N.C./Leesville Road), Stephen Chapman (Greensboro, N.C./Northwest Guilford), Donovon Japp (Oak Ridge, N.C./Northwest Guilford), Zach Joens (Asheville, N.C./Asheville), Tommy Labriola (Cary, N.C./Green Hope), Ben Steen (Mooresville, N.C./Lake Norman) and Keegan Tanaka (Austin, Texas/James Bowie).
The eight signees look to replace the eight seniors from the 2012 season, including Hermann Watch List selection Lee Williams and four-year starter, David Dodge.
"I am extremely pleased with the class we have signed today. They are going to bring work rate, enthusiasm and most importantly they are going to bring competition at every single position going into next season," Nelson said. "Each player is coming in with the expectation to win a starting position on the team. We want all of our players to be pushed in training and with this incoming class we will do just that. It is an exciting time for every App State fan."

Jackson Allen - Asheville HS - Fairview, N.C.
In his four seasons at Asheville, Allen was named all-conference every year. The midfielder was a member of 94 Red Highland Football Club under head coach Jeremy "Moe" Jordan. While playing with CESA 94's, Allen was named to the Best 11 team at the 2011 nationals.
Nelson on Allen: "Jackson can play anywhere along the left side of the field and with his athleticism, technical ability and understanding of the game, he will be a very good player for this program."

Simon Burke - Leesville Road HS - Raleigh, N.C.
Despite only playing one year at Leesville Road, Burke started as a midfielder and on the backline for the Pride. In his only season, Burke scored eight goals and tallied three assists. A member of CASL Chelsea FC, Burke led his team the USSDA Southern Conference Atlantic Division Championships and a national ranking of No. 5.

Nelson on Burke: "Simon will come in and help the program with his technical ability and understanding of the game. His composure on the ball and ability to get forward into the attack will be a big asset for our program."

Stephen Chapman - Northwest Guilford HS - Greensboro, N.C.
A four-year letterman for the Vikings, Chapman was named to all-conference and all-region teams in his final two seasons. As a senior, the Greensboro, N.C. native was selected to the all-area first team. Playing for PTFC Black, Chapman was part of a team that was a finalist for the NCYSA State Cup in 2012.
Nelson on Chapman: "Another attacking player that adds a ton of athleticism, strength, pace and a nose for goal that will immediately kick start our attack."

Donovon Japp - Northwest Guilford HS - Oak Ridge, N.C.
As a junior, Japp scored 19 goals and posted 25 assists as a teammate of Stephen Chapman at Northwest Guilford. Japp was named all-conference after his sophomore and junior seasons and was selected all-region after his junior year. During the club season, the midfielder was a member of North Carolina Fusion Academy, scoring 21 goals in two seasons with the club.
Nelson on Japp: "Donovan will bring a high work rate, a great understanding of the game and most importantly he brings a goal scoring ability that we think can help us immediately."

Zach Joens - Asheville HS - Asheville, N.C.
A teammate of Jackson Allen in high school and club play, Joens earned four letters and was named to the all-conference and all-region teams in his final three seasons at Asheville. Joens was also selected to the all-state team after two seasons. Playing for Highland Football Club, Joens captured the U-16 all-state championship and was a national league qualifier.
Nelson on Joens: "Zach is another left sided player that will come in and compete for a starting job early in his career. With his athletic ability, he can play anywhere on the field and contribute immediately upon his arrival."

Tommy Labriola - Green Hope HS - Cary, N.C.
In the past two seasons, Labriola has totaled 14 goals and 13 assists for Green Hope where he won a state championship at a junior. A member of CASL Chelsea FC alongside Simon Burke, the duo was participants in the USSDA Finals in 2010 and 2011.
Nelson on Labriola: "Tommy is the prototypical striker. He is extremely technical and will add a scoring ability that we have not had in a few years. He finds a way to get on the end of the ball in the box and will be an extremely dangerous striker for us."

Ben Steen - Lake Norman HS - Mooresville, N.C.
Under Jon Martes at Lake Norman, Steen was named all-conference after his sophomore and junior season and picked for all-region after his junior year. Most recently, he was named the team's defensive MVP. At the club level, Steen has been a three-year captain of NMSC U-18 Academy.
Nelson on Steen: "We have had our eye on Ben for the past few years. He will bring leadership to our backline and will be one of the hardest working players on and off the field on the roster. His intangibles are off the chart and added to his ability on the field we are excited to be able to work with him for the next four years."

Keegan Tanaka - James Bowie HS - Austin, Texas
Playing from the backline in high school, Tanaka scored five goals and added ten assists during his sophomore season. A member of Lone Star Academy, Tanaka was part of a championship at the Disney Soccer Showcase.
Nelson on Tanaka: "Keegan's athletic ability will give us the option to play him in a wide range of positions. He will help out across our backline that was riddled with injuries last year and should play a part in our defensive unit that has been one of the best throughout the country over the past two years."

Photo Courtesy: Matt Nelson, ASU Athletics