

Martin Selected By Lions

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Punter/kicker Sam Martin of Appalachian State University has been selected by the Detroit Lions in the fifth-round of the National Football League Draft with the 165th pick on Saturday. Martin ranks in or near the top ten in several of the various draft rankings. Martin was named the Football Championship Series National Punter of the Year (CFPA). He was selected First Team Southern Conference All-Conference, and he was named SoCon Special Teams Player of the Week on three different occasions during his senior year. Martin was a perfect 4-for-4 on field goal attempts and averaged 50.5 yards on four punts as Appalachian State topped Furman 33-28 to earn a share of the Southern Conference championship.

He was named SoCon Special Teams Player of the Week in ASU's 28-25 come-from-behind win at No. 25 Samford, Martin averaged 48.9 yards per punt on seven attempts. He placed two punts inside the Samford 20-yard line and booted a 60-yarder in the first quarter. Martin also handled the kickoff chores for the Mountaineers and placed four of his five kickoffs in the Samford end zone and forced two touchbacks.

And on September 2, Martin earned SoCon Special Teams Player of the Week honors after ASU's season opener at East Carolina. He averaged 45.2 yards per punt on six attempts and only allowed one return. Martin placed two punts inside the ECU 20-yard line and had a long punt of 53 yards. And he also handled the kickoff duties for the Mountaineers and averaged 61.7 yards per kickoff with two touchbacks.

He earned second-team all-Southern Conference as a junior, and he finished fourth in the SoCon and 27th nationally in punting average. In the season-opening loss at Virginia Tech, Martin averaged 45 yards over eight punts, including two kicks of 50 yards or more and two downed inside the 20 . Martin was named SoCon Special Teams Player of the Week. He punted just once in the home opener against North Carolina A&T, but it was a 69-yard bomb, good for his longest of the season and a tie for the eighth-longest in school history. He booted a 51-yard field goal, which tied him for the seventh-longest field goal in program history, against N.C. A&T.

Against Savannah State, Martin punted five times for a 47.0-yard average with two fair catches, he had two kicks of 50 yards or more and three of his punts were downed inside the 20 yard line . He was also perfect on two field-goal attempts, including his second 51-yarder in as many weeks, and he was named national and conference Special Teams Player of the Week for his performance against Savannah State.

Thirty-one of his 60 punts were fair caught (51.7 percent) during his sophomore year; 19 were downed inside the opponent's 20 yard line (31.7 percent) and only nine were able to be returned at all (15 percent). He had seven punts of 50 yards or longer and he downed at least one punt inside the 20 yard line in 11-of-13 games

Martin was twice named the SoCon Special Teams Player of the Week — after downing 3-of-7 punts inside the 20 yard line in a win at Samford and after averaging 43.7 yards per kick with four fair catches and two downed inside the 20 in a win over Furman. And he handled kickoffs for the first four games of the year and averaged 65.5 yards per kick (with the ball being received on average at the opponent's four yard line).

As a freshman, Martin exclusively handled ASU's punting and kickoff duties as a redshirt freshman. He was named to the Southern Conference all-freshman team by the league's coaches, and he helped ASU compile a net punting average of 35.5 yards, good for 19th nationally. Seventeen of his 52 punts had to be fair-caught (32.7 percent), and 19-of-52 pinned

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the opponent inside its 20 yard line (36.5 percent). He recorded his first-career 50-yarder in style by booming a 74-yarder in the waning seconds of come-from-behind victory at Wofford. Martin belted a 74-yarder, which tied him for the fourth-longest punt in school history and longest since Nate McKinney launched a 74-yarder at Wofford in 2003.

Martin was a soccer standout at Starr's Mill High School in Fayetteville, Ga. He played just one year of football in high school. But he averaged 69 yards per kickoff and was named all-county following his only gridiron campaign. Martin was a four-year soccer letter winner and earned all-state recognition as a junior. He also lettered twice in basketball.

Photo Courtesy: Sam Martin, ASU Athletics