

Martin, McCray Drafted; Three Agree to FA Deals

Written by Mike Flynn
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Two former Appalachian State University football standouts were selected in the 2013 National Football League Draft on Saturday at Radio City Music Hall. Punter/place kicker Sam Martin (Fayetteville, Ga./Starr's Mill) was drafted by the Detroit Lions with the 32nd pick of the fifth round (165th overall) and defensive back Demetrius McCray (Covington, Ga./Newton) was selected by the Jacksonville Jaguars with the fourth pick of the seventh round (210th overall). Additionally, shortly following the conclusion of the draft, former Appalachian State linebacker Jeremy Kimbrough (Decatur, Ga./Cedar Grove), running back Steven Miller (Piscataway, N.J./Piscataway) and defensive back Troy Sanders (Chester, S.C./Chester) agreed to join the Washington Redskins, Detroit Lions and Atlanta Falcons, respectively, as free agents. Martin and McCray are Appalachian State's 24th and 25th all-time NFL draft picks and eighth and ninth Mountaineers selected in the last six years.

Appalachian's two selections mark the fifth time in school history that multiple Mountaineers have been picked in the NFL Draft. Appalachian also had multiple draft picks in 1990 (Derrick Graham and Keith Collins), 1992 (Gary Dandridge and Mike Frier), 2008 (Dexter Jackson and Corey Lynch) and 2010 (Mark LeGree, Daniel Kilgore and D.J. Smith). It is also the second time in the last three years that Appalachian is the only NCAA Division I FCS program with multiple NFL draft picks.

Martin was named first-team All-America by the Associated Press in 2012 after ranking third nationally with a 45.9-yard punting average as a senior. His 45.9-yard average was the second-highest in school history, behind only a 47.3-yard average compiled in 1991 by the only other Appalachian State punter ever selected in the NFL Draft, Harold Alexander, who was picked by the Atlanta Falcons in the third round (67th overall) in 1993.

Twenty-five of Martin's 60 punts were downed inside the opponent's 20 yard line last season, which set a school record for punts downed inside the 20 and helped the Mountaineers rank second nationally with a 40.8-yard net punting average. He also excelled as Appalachian's kickoff specialist (averaging 63.1 yards with 45 touchbacks in 71 kickoffs) and place-kicker (making 7-of-10 field goals, including the final five of the season).

For his career, Martin ranked third in Appalachian State history with 226 punts and 9,397 punting yards, sixth with a 41.6-yard punting average and finished with 79 punts downed inside the 20 yard line and 38 that traveled 50 yards or more. McCray was a two-time all-America cornerback at Appalachian State, earning second-team honors from the Associated Press as a senior last season and fourth-team recognition from Phil Steele Publications as a junior. He tied for the Southern Conference lead with four interceptions in 2012, becoming the first Mountaineer cornerback to ever lead the league in interceptions twice (he also paced the SoCon with five INTs in 2011). McCray also led Appalachian with eight passes defended, ranked sixth on the squad with 55 tackles from his cornerback position and forced a fumble. He was one of 20 finalists for the 2012 Buck Buchanan Award, which is presented to the nation's top defensive player in NCAA Division I FCS.

McCray finished his collegiate career with 10 interceptions, 26 passes defended, two forced fumbles and 123 total tackles.

Kimbrough finished his career as one of the most decorated in a long line of star linebackers at Appalachian State. He was a two-time first-team all-American, placed second in voting for the 2012 Buck Buchanan Award and was named the Southern Conference Defensive Player of the Year as a senior in '12. His 143 tackles in 2012 were good for the third-highest total in the

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nation and seventh in Appalachian State single-season history. He also ranked third in the Southern Conference and among the top 100 nationally with 12.5 tackles for loss (1.04 per game) and 11th in the SoCon with 4.5 sacks.

Kimbrough finished with 312 tackles, 25 tackles for loss, 8.5 sacks, nine passes defended, two interceptions, two forced fumbles and two fumble recoveries in his stellar collegiate career.

In just two seasons at Appalachian State, Miller accounted for 2,312 yards and 19 touchdowns as a rusher, receiver and kick returner. He was an honorable-mention all-American as a senior in 2012 after ranking 16th nationally with 1,368 rushing yards. He also caught 34 passes for 377 yards and scored 15 total touchdowns (11 rushing, four receiving) in 2012.

Sanders started every game of his final three seasons at Appalachian State, with 13 starts at cornerback as a sophomore in 2010 and 24 at strong safety over the past two seasons. The hard-hitter amassed 233 total tackles, 13 tackles for loss and 1.5 sacks during his collegiate career while also racking up five interceptions and 20 passes defended in coverage. He had 40 tackles and three interceptions (tied for third in the Southern Conference) as a senior in 2012. Sanders also excelled off the field as an academic all-district honoree.

Thirteen former Mountaineers are currently in the NFL ranks. In addition to the five newest entries, running back Travaris Cadet (New Orleans Saints), wide receiver Armanti Edwards (Carolina Panthers), defensive end Jason Hunter (Oakland Raiders), offensive lineman Daniel Kilgore (San Francisco 49ers), defensive back Corey Lynch (free agent - played for the San Diego Chargers in 2012), defensive back DeAndre Presley (Miami Dolphins), wide receiver Brian Quick (St. Louis Rams) and linebacker D.J. Smith (San Diego Chargers) are also in the midst of NFL careers.

Photo Courtesy: Steven Miller, ASU Athletics