Written by Mike Flynn Tuesday, 01 November 2011 07:30

After helping Appalachian State University's defense stymie Georgia Southern's potent triple-option offense in Saturday's 24-17 win over the top-ranked Eagles, ASU defensive end Ronald Blair (Greensboro, Ga./Greene County) has been honored as the Southern Conference's Freshman of the Week, the league office announced on Monday. Blair led Appalachian's defensive linemen with eight

tackles and helped the Mountaineers limit Georgia Southern — the NCAA Division I FCS leader in scoring (44.6 points per game) and rushing (369.7 yards per game) coming in — to just 10 offensive points, 135 rushing yards and 201 yards of total offense, 286 fewer than the 487.3 yards per game it rolled up en route to its 7-0 start. Two of Blair's eight tackles were for a loss, including a fourth-down sack early in the ballgame that thwarted a GSU scoring opportunity.

Blair is Appalachian's first SoCon Freshman of the Week since DeAndre Presley (Tampa, Fla./Middleton) earned the recognition following his first-career start at Western Carolina in the final game of the 2008 regular season.

MOUNTAINEERS MOVE UP TO NO. 3 IN NATIONAL POLLS: Following its first win over a No. 1-ranked team in 12 years, Appalachian moved up two spots to No. 3 in The Sports Network (media) and American Football Coaches Association NCAA Division I FCS polls on Monday.

ASU held the nation's No. 3 ranking for four weeks earlier this season before suffering a 28-14 loss at then-No. 8 Wofford on Oct. 1. The Mountaineers are 13-7 all-time when ranked No. 3 nationally.

UP NEXT: With its destiny for an unprecedented seventh-straight SoCon championship in its own hands, Appalachian (6-2, 4-1 SoCon) travels to face longtime rival and red-hot Furman (5-3, 4-2 SoCon) on Saturday in Greenville, S.C. Kickoff is set for 1:30 p.m. at Furman's Paladin Stadium. Since dropping a 50-20 decision at Georgia Southern on Oct. 15, Furman has posted back-to-back impressive league victories over Wofford (26-21) and Chattanooga (14-7). Appalachian won just six of its first 29 all-time matchups against Furman but has dominated the

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series since the turn of the millennium, winning 10 of the 12 meetings since 2000, including a record six-straight victories over the Paladins.