

ASU Football Finalizes 2012 Schedule

Written by Mike Flynn

Wednesday, 07 December 2011 12:54

Appalachian State University football unveiled one of its most challenging schedules in recent memory when it finalized the

2012 gridiron slate on Wednesday.

In addition to its regular grueling Southern Conference ledger, the 2012 schedule also includes three high-profile non-conference contests versus Montana, East Carolina and Coastal Carolina.

For the first time since 2001, Appalachian opens the campaign at home when it hosts fellow NCAA Division I FCS power Montana at Kidd Brewer Stadium on Sept. 1. Appalachian and Montana are the nation's winningest FCS programs since 2005 with 79 and 76 victories, respectively, and have combined for five national championships since 1995 (UM in 1995 and 2001 and ASU in 2005, '06 and '07). The Mountaineers and Grizzlies have also made 10 championship-game appearances and earned 40 NCAA Division I FCS/I-AA playoff berths between them.

The regular-season meeting is the first between the two programs and Montana's first-ever visit to Boone. The Apps and Griz have squared off twice in the postseason, with Montana winning nail-biters over Appalachian in the 2000 and 2009 national semifinals (19-16 in overtime and 24-17, respectively). The matchup is the first of a home-and-home series arranged by the two schools in 2009. ASU makes a return trip to Missoula, Mont. in 2013.

It doesn't get any easier for the Mountaineers the following week when they make their second trip to Greenville, N.C. in four years to face longtime rival East Carolina. ASU and ECU last met in the 2009 season opener when the Mountaineers, playing without All-America quarterback Armanti Edwards, who was sidelined by a foot injury sustained in a freakish offseason lawn-mowing accident, fell behind 24-0 in the first half and trailed 29-7 in the fourth quarter but staged a frantic rally behind third-string signal-caller Travaris Cadet before ultimately falling just short in a 29-24 loss. Cadet led Appalachian on three-straight fourth-quarter scoring drives to bring the Mountaineers within five points but their final drive stalled at midfield with less than a minute to go in the ballgame. Several thousand Black-and-Gold faithful were among the sellout crowd of 43,279 at Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium that afternoon, ECU's second-largest crowd of the season.

Appalachian owns a 19-11 edge in the all-time series between the one-time conference rivals but East Carolina has won all four meetings since it left the Southern Conference in 1977. However, the Mountaineers' margin of defeat has decreased in all four post-SoCon meetings — losing by 31 points in 1977 (45-14), 25 in 1978 (33-8) and 17 in 1979 (38-21) before the five-point thriller in '09.

ASU is slated to open conference play at home on Sept. 15 versus The Citadel before a trip to Chattanooga on Sept. 22. The Mountaineers will then wrap up non-conference action on Sept. 29 versus Coastal Carolina. The trip to The Rock is CCU's third since beginning its football program in 2003. Appalachian has dominated the first two meetings, routing the 17th-ranked Chanticleers, 30-3, in 2005 and picking up an easy 45-28 victory over No. 13 Coastal in the opening round of the 2006 NCAA Division I Football Championship.

Beginning the first weekend of October, the Mountaineers close out the season with six-straight

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SoCon contests — at home versus Elon (Oct. 6), Wofford (Oct. 20) and Furman (Nov. 10) and at Samford (Oct. 13), Western Carolina (Oct. 27) and 2011 conference champion Georgia Southern (Nov. 3), which will be looking to avenge its only defeat of the '11 regular season, a 24-17 ASU triumph in Boone on Oct. 24.

Appalachian will play its entire 2012 slate without the benefit of an open week, as its only bye is scheduled for the final weekend of the regular season (Nov. 17). Should ASU earn an eighth-consecutive NCAA Division I Football Championship berth and receive a first-round bye, it will have three full weeks to prepare for a run at a fourth national title.

Specialty dates, such as homecoming, Black Saturday, Family Weekend and Hall of Fame Day, will be announced in the near future, as will 2012 ticket information. Kickoff times won't be set until television arrangements are finalized next summer.

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING ABOUT THE 2012 SCHEDULE:

"We're pleased to announce this schedule, which we think is one of the most challenging and fan-friendly schedules that we have ever had at Appalachian. Between six home games — including one of the nation's premier games of the year when Montana comes to The Rock for the season opener — and a trip to East Carolina, we believe that our fans will be just as excited as our players, coaches and staff are for 2012. Special thanks to associate athletics director Jay Sutton for his hard work in helping put together this great slate. We look forward to seeing everyone at The Rock in 2012."

— ASU director of athletics **Charlie Cobb**

"This is a good, tough schedule that is great for players, coaches and fans alike. I've always felt that you get better by playing tough teams so we're looking forward to the opportunity to

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challenge ourselves against teams like Montana, East Carolina and Coastal Carolina. Additionally, it's great for our fans to get to see teams like Montana in Boone and to renew a rivalry that means a lot to our alumni and supporters against East Carolina.”

— ASU head coach Jerry Moore

2012 APPALACHIAN STATE FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

| Date | Opponent | Site |
|---------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| SEPTEMBER 1 | MONTANA | BOONE, N.C. |
| September 8 | at East Carolina | Greenville, S.C. |
| SEPTEMBER 15 | THE CITADEL* | BOONE, N.C. |
| September 22 | at Chattanooga* | Chattanooga, Tenn. |
| SEPTEMBER 29 | COASTAL CAROLINA | BOONE, N.C. |
| OCTOBER 6 | ELON* | BOONE, N.C. |
| October 13 | at Samford* | Birmingham, Ala. |
| OCTOBER 20 | WOFFORD* | BOONE, N.C. |
| October 27 | at Western Carolina* | Cullowhee, N.C. |
| November 3 | at Georgia Southern* | Statesboro, Ga. |
| NOVEMBER 10 | FURMAN* | BOONE, N.C. |

* denotes Southern Conference game
Kickoff times and specialty dates TBA

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HOME GAMES IN BOLD

Photo Courtesy: Jamal Jackson and Steven Miller, by Keith Cline, ASU Athletics