

League-High Five Apps Named Preseason All-SoCon

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Appalachian State University baseball landed a league-high five players on the preseason all-Southern Conference baseball teams, the SoCon announced on Wednesday. Appalachian's preseason all-SoCon honorees include first-team designated hitter

Daniel Kassouf (Lexington, N.C./North Davidson) and four second-teamers: starting pitcher Ryan Arrowood (Rutherfordton, N.C./R-S Central), relief pitcher David Port (Dunwoody, Ga./Dunwoody), third baseman Zack Briggs (Lexington, N.C./Central Davidson) and outfielder Tyler Zupcic (Charlotte, N.C./Providence).

The Mountaineers' lone first-team selection, Kassouf led ASU and tied for 11th in the SoCon with eight home runs a season ago. As they did at the conclusion of last season, Arrowood and Zupcic collected second-team recognition. Arrowood ranked among the SoCon's top six in wins (8-3), ERA (2.96) and strikeouts (83) in 2011 while Zupcic paced ASU and ranked sixth in the league with a .350 batting average last year. Port (2-0, 2.33 ERA in 29 relief appearances in 2011) and Briggs (.293, 5 HR, 16 2B, 32 RBI in '11).

Second baseman Hector Crespo (Miami, Fla./Florida Christian), who hit .316 last season with a .350 average in SoCon play, and first baseman Trey Holmes (Rockwell, N.C./East Rowan), who hit .298 with six home runs, 45 RBI and 16 doubles while playing a sterling first base defensively, were tough-luck omissions from the preseason all-conference squads.

Despite the absence of Crespo and Holmes, ASU's five preseason all-SoCon honorees led all schools, followed by Georgia Southern and Samford with three each. The preseason all-conference teams are selected by the SoCon's coaches. Coaches are not permitted to vote for players from their own club.

The SoCon also announced results from its preseason baseball polls on Wednesday. The conference's coaches picked Appalachian to finish fifth in the perennially powerful baseball league while the media tabbed the Mountaineers sixth.

The coaches favor College of Charleston to win the 2012 SoCon crown, followed by Georgia Southern, Samford, Elon and ASU. The media overwhelmingly picked Georgia Southern to repeat as SoCon champion, followed by C of C, Elon, Samford, UNC Greensboro and ASU. Appalachian, which returns 8-of-9 members of its starting lineup and 4-of-5 starting pitchers from last year's 33-27 squad that finished sixth in the SoCon with a 15-15 mark, opens the 2012 campaign on Friday, Feb. 17 versus George Mason in Elon, N.C.

Photo Courtesy: Daniel Kassouf, by Dave Mayo, ASU Athletics