

Trotman Named SoCon Male Athlete of Year

Written by Mike Flynn
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Appalachian State University wrestler Austin Trotman (Winston-Salem, N.C./Mount Tabor) has been named the Southern Conference's Bob Waters Male Athlete of the year, the conference announced on Tuesday at its spring meetings. Trotman will receive the award at the SoCon's annual Honors Dinner

on Wednesday evening at the DoubleTree Biltmore. Trotman is the fifth Mountaineer in the last eight years and the ninth overall to earn recognition as the SoCon's top male athlete. He made national headlines by defeating the country's top-three-ranked wrestlers en route to a third-place finish at the 2012 NCAA Division I Wrestling Championships, the best individual showing by a SoCon wrestler in nearly 30 years.

The 184-pounder posted a 38-5 overall record during his all-America campaign as a senior with all five losses coming at the hands of nationally ranked opponents. He was 129-34 in his career; he was also the first four-time NCAA qualifier in school history, and the first three-time SoCon champion since 2003.

He dominated Southern Conference competition, going 6-0 during the regular season and cruising to the league's 184-pound title by virtue of a pair of technical falls at the SoCon Championships. For his efforts, he was named the SoCon's Wrestler of the Month and Wrestler of the Week twice each, earned all-conference recognition and was honored as the SoCon Tournament's Most Outstanding Wrestler.

Most notable, however, was Trotman's third-place showing at the 2012 NCAA Division I Wrestling Championships in St. Louis. Seeded ninth going into the national tournament, Trotman burst onto the national scene when he knocked off No. 1 seed Joe LeBlanc of Wyoming in the quarterfinals. After dropping a heartbreaking 4-2 overtime decision to eventual national champion Steve Bosak of Cornell in the semifinals, Trotman rebounded to defeat No. 3 Ben Bennett of Central Michigan in the consolation semifinals and No. 2 Robert Hamlin of Lehigh in the third-place match. The third-place national finish was the best by a Mountaineer since 1941 and by any SoCon wrestler since 1983.

Thanks in large part to the efforts of Trotman and fellow senior Kyle Blevins (Sapulpa, Okla./Sapulpa), who placed fourth nationally at 165 pounds, Appalachian won its first SoCon team championship since 2003, ending Chattanooga's seven-year grip on the conference title. The Mountaineers also placed 21st as a team at the national championships, good for the Mountaineers' best showing since 1982.

The Winston-Salem, N.C. native concluded his career as Appalachian's all-time leader with 129 wins and the program's first four-time national-tournament qualifier. He 38 wins in 2011-12 are good for second in ASU history.

Trotman is Appalachian's ninth SoCon Male Athlete of the Year but its first from outside of the football program. He is the first wrestler to win the award in its 65-year history.

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APPALACHIAN STATE'S SOUTHERN CONFERENCE MALE ATHLETES OF THE YEAR

1979-80 — Rick Beasley (football, track and field)
1986-87 — John Settle (football)
1995-96 — Dexter Coakley (football)
1996-97 — Dexter Coakley (football)
2004-05 — DaVon Fowlkes (football)
2005-06 — Richie Williams (football)
2006-07 — Marques Murrell (football)
2009-10 — Armanti Edwards (football)
2011-12 — Austin Trotman (wrestling)