

ASU Football Hosts Media Day

Written by Mike Flynn

Saturday, 04 August 2012 15:58

Appalachian State University football hosted more than a dozen local and regional media outlets on Saturday during its annual Media Day at Kidd Brewer Stadium. In addition to fielding questions from the media, the Mountaineers' players, coaches and support staff also posed for their official team photos on a pleasantly cool and overcast morning at The Rock. Following the on-field activities and live Appalachian IMG Sports Network radio broadcast, Appalachian's entire coaching staff took part in a media luncheon during which assistant head coach/offensive coordinator Scott Satterfield, defensive coordinator Dale Jones and head coach Jerry Moore held a formal question-and-answer session with the scribes in attendance. And Moore is glad the season is officially underway.

"We waited all summer for (Friday) to get here," he said. "(Going) back to the winter workouts, we see a different demeanor in our players now. (Friday) was probably one of the best opening days we've had. I think this maybe the toughest schedule we've ever had since I've been here. Top to bottom this year, there is not an easy football game on that whole list. We've sped the tempo up quite a lot. We are in good condition and we'll need (the) stamina. East Carolina will be in really good condition and we need to match them or do better."

Defensively, the Mountaineers feature two first-team All-America players in linebacker Jeremy Kimbrough and defensive back Demetrius McCray. Those two backbone a unit that got stronger as the season progressed last season.

"As a defensive staff, we are excited about the kids we have returning," said Defensive Coordinator Dale Jones, who begins his second season in that capacity. "We have quite a few guys in the secondary and linebacker that got to play a lot last year. Our back seven is really strong and we have some kids coming in as freshmen who have tremendous talent. I think what it is really going to come down to is our senior leadership. (Jeremy) Kimbrough, (Troy) Sanders and (Demetrius) McCray — they have done incredible job of leading this defensive team.

"We've got some kids who played there quite a bit last year. We feel like we have a lot of guys who can help us and we are pretty excited about where we are at. The freshman group is as talented as I've ever seen. It comes down to them being able to absorb everything we do. I feel good about where the coaches will get them."

And the 2012 season also includes a familiar face in Satterfield, who returns to ASU following stints at Toledo and Florida International. Satterfield was part of three national championships and six Southern Conference titles as a player and coach at Appalachian State, returns to Appalachian this season as assistant head coach, offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach.

"First of all, I'm glad to be back here at App State," he said. "It's been three years I've been gone but it is a special place here and we hope to continue to do everything we've done in the past and move forward with that. One of the first things we did this season is increase the tempo. We are trying to go faster. We are trying to go as fast as we can possibly go in our offense. We have told the players that they can't possibly go too fast. The goal is to be going so fast that we have to wait on the referees — that is the point we hope to get to.

"Our offensive line has really come on strong for us. I think that by the end of the spring they were really clicking on all cylinders. And (Rod) Chisholm and (Steven) Miller are two seniors at running back who want to prove themselves and they have shown that throughout the (offseason). We have four really good running backs that are all kind of different. (Tysean) Holloway is a freshman that was with us in the spring and has great talent and potential,

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(Michael) Frazier is a bigger back, Miller is a smaller guy with great speed and Chisholm is kind of a mixture of the two — he has good speed but is a guy that at 198 or 200 pounds can also run between the tackles for us."

Satterfield, who spent 15 seasons at ASU as a player (1992-95) and coach (1998-2008), returns after three years away from his alma mater. He left Appalachian to be the passing game coordinator and quarterbacks coach at Toledo in 2009 before spending the last two seasons as the offensive coordinator at Florida International. He is the first coach to hold the title of assistant head coach in Moore's 24 years at Appalachian and the Mountaineers' first official offensive coordinator since Rob Best held the title from 1989-2002.

Following media day, the Mountaineers held their second practice of the season, once again in shorts and helmets per NCAA rules. The Apps will don shoulder pads for the first time on Sunday and Monday before moving into full pads and contact on Tuesday. All practices are closed to the general public but GoASU.com will have exclusive updates from the practice field throughout fall camp.

Mountaineers Officially Open Practice Friday

OVERVIEW

Appalachian State University football officially began preparations for the 2012 season with its first practice of the year on Friday afternoon at Kidd Brewer Stadium. The Mountaineers practiced for two hours in shorts and helmets. Per NCAA rules, Appalachian will work out in helmets and shorts for its first two practices of the year, followed by two more practices in shorts and shoulder pads before moving into full pads and full contact for its fifth practice of the season on Tuesday.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Appalachian picked up where it left off in the spring in terms of tempo and intensity. The Mountaineers practiced at a breakneck pace throughout the afternoon with players moving from play to play and drill to drill with nary a wasted moment.

- A big reason why the Mountaineers could practice at such a high tempo was that they appear to be in top-notch physical shape. Even after two hours on the field, the Apps hardly seemed fazed by conditioning drills at the end of practice. Head coach Jerry Moore credited first-year director of strength and conditioning Kareem Young for his work with the team during the offseason while some players also attributed their readiness for camp to the player-led practices that the team conducted without the benefit of coaches over the course of the summer.

- A huge emphasis was placed on special teams on the first day of fall camp with at least four of the day's 16 periods dedicated to them. With first-year assistant coach Mark Ivey overseeing the special teams, many of the drills had a new look. One of the most engaging drills of the day came late in the afternoon when cones were set up to direct players on the proper path to come off the edge and block a punt. Ivey was particularly vocal during that drill as he implored players to take the correct course and block the punt with their hands rather than their bodies.

- One of the noticeable personnel changes from last year is also on special teams, where senior punter Sam Martin was the holder for incumbent place kicker Drew Stewart. Martin and Stewart were expected to battle for place-kicking duties during fall camp but it appears that at this point, Stewart has a grip on that job and Martin will focus on punting and, now, holding.

- Appalachian's highly regarded recruiting class saw their first official action in the Black and Gold and several look to be in the mix to compete for significant playing time as true freshmen. The standouts included Dante Blackmon, who spent much of the afternoon working with the first team secondary, and Malachi Jones, who saw a lot of reps at wideout. Paul Magloire looks to be locked in an early battle with sophomore Logan Hallock and redshirt freshman Kameron Bryant to earn the job as the top backup behind first-team preseason all-Southern Conference quarterback Jamal Jackson.

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QUOTABLE

"Like I'm sure 99.9 percent of the coaches around the country are saying today, I think we had a great first practice."

- Head coach Jerry Moore

Photo Courtesy: Jerry Moore Greets The Team on Media Day, ASU Athletics