

SoCon Football Coaches Pick Georgia Southern

Written by Jason Yaman
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The Georgia Southern Eagles have been picked first in preseason polling conducted by the Southern Conference's head football coaches. The Eagles, who earned six of nine first-place votes, earned a share of the 2012 league title with a record of 6-2 and advanced to the FCS semifinals. It is the second consecutive year they have been picked first in preseason balloting.

The Eagles, along with Appalachian State, are ineligible for the FCS playoffs and the Southern Conference championship this fall as they begin their transition to FBS. The Mountaineers were tabbed second in the preseason poll. Appalachian State earned two first-place votes and finished with 51 points. The Mountaineers will be under the direction of first-year head coach Scott Satterfield.

Chattanooga earned the final first-place vote and was picked third with 47 points. It is the highest the Mocs have picked in the coaches poll since 1990. Chattanooga returns 10 starters on both sides of the ball in 2013, including defensive lineman Davis Tull, who was named the league's Defensive Player of the Year last season.

Samford was picked fourth with 43 points, tying its highest showing in the poll since joining the league in 2008. Head coach Pat Sullivan enters his seventh season with the Bulldogs, who have seen their win total rise each of the last two years.

Wofford (40 points) was tabbed fifth after earning a share of the league crown last season. The Terriers have advanced to the FCS playoffs each of the last three seasons. The Citadel was slotted sixth with 33 points. The Bulldogs enter their ninth season under head coach Kevin Higgins. The Citadel went 7-4 a season ago, including a 5-3 mark in league play, its best record in the SoCon since winning the league (6-1) in 1992.

Furman was tabbed seventh with 25 points, while Elon followed in eighth place (16). The Paladins return nine starters on offense, while the Phoenix returns nine defensive starters from a season ago. Western Carolina (12) rounded out the poll. Head coach Mark Speir returns for his second season with the Catamounts and returns 40 lettermen, including six offensive and seven defensive starters.

2013 SoCon Football Preseason Coaches Poll

School	(First-place votes)	Points
1. Georgia Southern	(6)	57
2. Appalachian State	(2)	51
3. Chattanooga	(1)	47
4. Samford		43
5. Wofford		40
6. The Citadel		33
7. Furman		25
8. Elon		16
9. Western Carolina		12

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NOTE: Coaches were not permitted to vote for their own team