

Cox, Law on Jerry Rice Award Watch List

Written by Mike Flynn

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Appalachian State University running back Marcus Cox (Dacula, Ga./Dacula) and inside linebacker John Law (Atlanta, Ga./Grady) are among 20 players on the initial watch list for the 2013 Jerry Rice Award,

which is presented annually to the nation's top NCAA Division I FCS freshman.

Appalachian State is the only program with two representatives on the official watch list for the Rice Award, which is be presented by The Sports Network. The winner of the third-annual Rice Award will be announced on Dec. 16 in Philadelphia.

Just five games and three starts into his collegiate career, Cox leads the Southern Conference in touchdowns (10 — 2.0 pg), scoring (60 points — 12.0 ppg), receiving yardage (415 — 83.0 ypg) and touchdown receptions (5 — 1.0 pg). He ranks among the SoCon's top 10 individuals in eight different statistical categories, including all-purpose yardage (second — 415 total /83.0 per game), receptions (t-fourth — 22/4.4 pg), rushing touchdowns (fifth — 5/1.0 pg) and rushing yardage (ninth — 398/79.6 ypg).

He has scored multiple touchdowns in each of the last four games and is averaging 227 all-purpose yards per game over his first three career starts. The true freshman was especially impressive in the first start of his career at Elon on Sept. 21, when he amassed 159 rushing

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yards, 149 receiving yards and three touchdowns (two receiving, one rushing) in Appalachian State's 31-21 victory. In the process, he became the first Mountaineer to ever compile 100 rushing yards and 100 receiving yards in the same game and set school records for receiving yards by a running back and a true freshman.

He was named the SoCon and National Freshman of the Week following the record-breaking performance at Elon and earned the SoCon recognition again the following week after racking up 180 all-purpose yards (89 rushing, 91 receiving) and three touchdowns (two rushing, one receiving) in a 27-24 loss to Charleston Southern. He is just the third Mountaineer to ever be named SoCon Freshman of the Week in consecutive weeks and the first since quarterback Armanti Edwards accomplished the feat in 2006.

A redshirt freshman, Law leads the Southern Conference with 11.4 tackles per game (57 total) and is tied for second in the league with two interceptions. Like Cox, he has earned weekly recognition from the SoCon twice in five games, being named the league's Freshman of the Week after tallying 12 tackles, a sack and a tackle for loss in the season opener at Montana and the Defensive Player of the Week after recording 15 tackles, two interceptions and a fumble recovery in the Sept. 21 triumph at Elon.

In the impressive performance at Elon, Law became the first Mountaineer with three takeaways in a game since Mark LeGree versus Wofford on Oct. 31, 2008 and the first Appalachian linebacker with two interceptions in a game since Tony Brown against Mississippi College on Nov. 9, 1991. He is also the first App State freshman to record double-digit tackles in three-straight games since D.J. Smith in 2007.

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In addition to being named to the initial Rice Award watch list, Law was also named the SoCon's Defensive Player of the Month for September on Wednesday. He is only the third Appalachian State freshman to ever earn Player-of-the-Month honors from the SoCon, joining Edwards (Nov. 2006) and Smith (Nov. 2007).

Cox, Law and the Mountaineers look to keep pace in the race for the SoCon's best league record when they host first-place and 23rd-ranked Samford (4-2, 2-0 SoCon) on Saturday at Kidd Brewer Stadium. Kickoff for the homecoming contest is set for 3:30 p.m.