

## Four Apps Named Freshman All-America by CSJ

Written by Mike Flynn

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Appalachian State University football led all programs with four representatives on College Sports Journal's 2013 NCAA Division I FCS freshman all-American teams, which were announced on Friday.

Appalachian State running back Marcus Cox (Dacula, Ga./Dacula), tight end Barrett Burns (Woodstock, Ga./Etowah), inside linebacker John Law (Atlanta, Ga./Grady) and punter Bentlee Critcher (South Daytona, Fla./Warner Christian Academy) all earned first-team freshman all-America recognition from CSJ.

Cox, the runner-up for the 2013 Jerry Rice Award (FCS Freshman of the Year), set Appalachian State freshman records and led the Southern Conference with 1,250 rushing yards, 1,809 yards from scrimmage and 21 total touchdowns in his first collegiate campaign. He also tied a school record with 15 rushing touchdowns and set a new conference record by being named the SoCon Freshman of the Week six times. In addition to placing second in balloting for the Rice Award, the true freshman was also the consensus SoCon Freshman of the Year, a first-team all-conference honoree and the only FCS representative on 247Sports' true-freshman all-America team.

Burns ranked fifth on the team with 22 receptions and seventh on the squad with 205 receiving yards as a redshirt freshman. His eight receptions in Appalachian's 33-21 win over Wofford on Nov. 16 were the most by a Mountaineer tight end since 2000 while his 63 receiving yards were the most by an App State TE since 2008.

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Despite being hampered by a lower-body injury over the second half of the season, Law finished third on the team and tied for 30th in the SoCon with 71 tackles as a redshirt freshman. He led the SoCon in tackles for much of the campaign, with 57 of his 71 stops coming in the first five games of the season. He recorded at least 12 tackles in each of the first three contests of the season to become the first App State freshman with double-digit tackles in three-straight games since D.J. Smith in 2007 and finished the season tied atop the SoCon with three interceptions.

Critcher set Appalachian State and Southern Conference freshman records by averaging 45.9 yards per punt in 2013, good for third and fourth overall in the school's and conference's all-time annals, respectively. The 45.9-yard average was also good for second nationally among FCS punters in 2013 (tops among FCS freshmen). Eighteen of his 51 punts traveled 50 yards or more and 15 were downed inside the opponent's 20-yard line. Thanks to opponents being able to return just 19 of the true freshman's 51 punts, Appalachian led the SoCon with a gaudy 40.6-yard net punting average. He finished 17th in balloting for the 2013 Rice Award, earned third-team FCS all-America recognition from The Sports Network and was a consensus first-team all-SoCon selection.

The 2013 campaign was Appalachian State's final season at the FCS level. The Mountaineers join the NCAA Division I FBS Sun Belt Conference in 2014.

**Photo Courtesy: Marcus Cox, ASU Athletics**