

Furman Leads All-Sports Races

Written by Phil Perry

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After a banner fall season that saw Furman's men and women's programs combine to claim five Southern Conference titles, the Paladins sit atop the

standings for both all-sport trophies after the fall sport seasons.

The Commissioner's and Germann cups are awarded annually to the Southern Conference schools fielding the league's best all-around men's and women's sports programs, respectively. Schools earn points based upon their regular-season finishes, with two bonus points going to the teams that win their respective conference tournaments.

Through three sport seasons, the Paladin men have accumulated 29 points toward the Commissioner's Cup. Furman's men's cross country team got things started by winning its first SoCon Championship since 1976, earning 11 points in the all-sport race.

Its soccer team followed that with a fourth-place finish in the league to add eight points to the total, and the Paladin football team earned a share of the regular-season title for the first time since 2004 to grab another 10 points.

Furman holds a 7.5-point advantage over Appalachian State, winner of the last eight Commissioner's Cups. The Mountaineers finished second at the cross country championship. Elon sits third with 20.5 points, just a point back of Appalachian State.

The Phoenix's point total is buoyed by a second-place finish in men's soccer and the two-point bonus for winning the tournament. Wofford, which won the men's soccer regular season, is fourth with 19.5 points, followed by UNCG (17), Samford (16), Davidson (13.5), Georgia Southern (13), The Citadel (9.5) and Western Carolina (7.5), each of which sponsors two of the three fall sports.

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In the race for the Germann Cup, the Paladin women excelled in all three fall sports to earn 33.5 points. Furman's women's cross country team won its first championship since 2000 to get things started, and the women's soccer team won the regular-season and tournament titles as the Paladins had the maximum possible number of points through the completion of two sports.

Furman's volleyball team tied for second in the regular season. UNCG is second with 26 points, as the Spartan women also turned in a consistent fall, finishing third in cross country and women's soccer and fourth in volleyball.

Elon, runner-up to the Paladins in cross country and women's soccer, sits third with 24 points, while Samford is fourth with 22.5. Defending Germann Cup champion Appalachian State is fifth with 21.5 points, and Georgia Southern, which won the volleyball regular-season and tournament titles, is sixth with 17 points.

Davidson is seventh with 15 points, followed by Wofford (14.5), Western Carolina (13), Chattanooga (10) and The Citadel (five). The Commissioner's Cup was inaugurated in 1970 and the Germann Cup was first awarded in 1987. The latter is named for former SoCon Commissioner Ken Germann, who served as commissioner of the Southern Conference from 1974-86 and spearheaded the effort to introduce women's athletics to the league.

Appalachian State has won the Commissioner's Cup 33 times in the last 36 years, interrupted only by East Tennessee State in 1982-83, Furman in 1990-91 and Chattanooga in 2004-05. Just five schools have ever won the Germann Cup.

Appalachian State won the first six and has 10 total, while Furman won 12 straight from 1992-2004. College of Charleston won the first of its three titles in 2004-05, while Chattanooga won in 2007-08 and Samford in 2009-10.

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Commissioner's Cup (through fall sports)

(Men's athletics)

1. Furman 29
- 2. Appalachian State 21.5**
3. Elon 20.5
4. Wofford 19.5
5. Chattanooga 19
6. UNCG 17
7. Samford 16
8. Davidson 13.5
9. Georgia Southern 13
10. The Citadel 9.5
11. Western Carolina 7.5

Germann Cup (through fall sports)

(Women's athletics)

1. Furman 33.5
2. UNCG 26
3. Elon 24
4. Samford 22.5
- 5. Appalachian State 21.5**
6. Georgia Southern 17
7. Davidson 15
8. Wofford 14.5
9. Western Carolina 13
10. Chattanooga 10
11. The Citadel 5