



WESTERN CAROLINA

CATAMOUNT FOOTBALL | 2025 NATIONAL SIGNING DAY RECEPTION

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WESTERN CAROLINA FOOTBALL COMPLETES 2025 INCOMING CLASS

Western Carolina football and head coach **KERWIN BELL** added a total of **30** student-athletes for the fall 2025 semester, welcoming 17 mid-year transfers and 18 incoming freshmen who signed on National Signing Day (Feb. 5). *WCU expects approximately 10 more additions to the roster ahead of preseason camp with incoming walk-ons. As these preferred walk-ons do not sign the Grant-In-Aid with the University, NCAA regulations prohibit including these walk-ons on signing day promotional materials until after deposits have been paid to the University.*

A combined **12** of WCU's newcomers are already enrolled in the spring 2025 semester and will participate in the squad's annual spring drills scheduled to commence on March 3 with the Spring Game on Saturday, April 5, 2025.

The bulk of WCU's incoming class is earmarked for the offensive side of the football including 16 of the 30 newcomers with seven offensive linemen and six wide receivers dominating the class. The WCU football staff added a combined 13 on defense including six in the secondary, four along the line, and three linebackers. The Catamounts also added a freshman kicker to the special teams unit.

A combined **EIGHT** of the new Catamounts in WCU's 2025 incoming class between the mid-year enrollees and those added on National Signing Day received three-star ratings from either 247Sports, ESPN, or Rivals.com. **FCS Football Central on SI** and **HEROSports** ranked Western Carolina's incoming class No. 7 in the nation when weighing just the incoming high school freshmen and No. 8 in the nation when including all newcomers from high school and the transfer portal. WCU was the **ONLY team in the Southern Conference** listed on the Top 10 list on both.



Scan the QR Code for complete 2025 NSD Bios

NOTING WCU'S 2025 INCOMING CLASS:

BY POSITION (16 on offense, 13 on defense, 1 on special teams):

Defensive Back (6): Nassor Ashenafi, Devin Brown, Jayden Cornelius, Cam'Ron Dabney, Joel Mintze, Christian Robbins

Defensive Line (4): Jahleel Anderson, J'veon Bush, Cain Jefferson, Brandon Joseph II

Linebacker (3): Trey Berry III, Bryce Hart, Jordan Thompson

Offensive Line (7): Elijah Collins, Cole Cooke, John Hammond, Ilija Krajnovic, Vito Moriana-Sigel, Renard Smith, La'Charles Taylor

Tight End (1): Josiah Thomas

Wide Receiver (6): Anthony Benjamin, Richard Hollis, Antwan Moore, Michael Rossin, Kha'leal Sterling, Trey Walker

Running Back (1): Josh Perry

Quarterback (1): Jordan Martin-Durham

Kicker (1): Marcus Trout

BY LOCATION (from FIVE different states and D.C. and TWO International):

Florida (18): Anthony Benjamin (Fort Myers), Trey Berry III (Lakeland), Devin Brown (Miami), J'veon Bush (Orlando), Elijah Collins (Lehigh Acres), Cole Cooke (Fort Myers), Jayden Cornelius (Plant City), Richard Hollis (Pompano Beach), Brandon Joseph II (Ft. Lauderdale), Jordan Martin-Durham (Jacksonville), Joel Mintze (Delray Beach), Antwan Moore (Miami), Josh Perry (Orlando), Christian Robbins (Orlando), Michael Rossin (Suwannee), Kha'leal Sterling (Miami), La'Charles Taylor (Sanford), Marcus Trout (Cocoa)

Georgia (6): Jahleel Anderson (Statesboro), Cam'Ron Dabney (Atlanta), Cain Jefferson (Decatur), Bryce Hart (Ringgold), Renard Smith (Dallas), Trey Walker (Hoschton)

North Carolina (1): Jordan Thompson (Charlotte)

South Carolina (1): John Hammond (Spartanburg)

Texas (1): Josiah Thomas (Austin)

Washington, D.C. (1): Nassor Ashenafi (Washington, D.C.)

International (2): Ilija Krajnovic (Serbia); Vito Moriana-Sigel (Spain)

NAME	POS.	HT.	WT.	YR.	HOMETOWN (PREVIOUS SCHOOL / HIGH SCHOOL)
Jahleel Anderson #	DL	6-4	305	Sr.	Statesboro, Ga. (Alcorn State / Highland CC / Statesboro HS)
Nassor Ashenafi	DB	5-9	175	Fr.	Washington, D.C. (Mallard Creek (N.C.) HS)
Anthony Benjamin #	WR	5-10	160	R-So.	Fort Myers, Fla. (Jacksonville State / Dunbar HS)
Trey Berry III	LB	6-1	210	Fr.	Lakeland, Fla. (Lakeland Christian HS)
Devin Brown	CB	5-10	170	Fr.	Miami, Fla. (Northwestern HS)
J'veon Bush	DL	6-5	290	Fr.	Orlando, Fla. (Jones HS)
Elijah Collins #	OL	6-5	305	So.	Lehigh Acres, Fla. (West Virginia Wesleyan / East Lee County HS)
Cole Cooke	OL	6-8	315	Fr.	Fort Myers, Fla. (Riverdale HS)
Jayden Cornelius	CB	5-10	170	Fr.	Plant City, Fla. (Durant HS)
Cam'Ron Dabney #	CB	5-11	185	5th	Atlanta, Ga. (Northern Illinois / Kansas / Cherokee Bluff HS)
John Hammond	OL	6-5	300	Fr.	Spartanburg, S.C. (Spartanburg HS)
Bryce Hart	LB	6-2	220	Fr.	Ringgold, Ga. (Ringgold HS)
Richard Hollis	WR	5-8	170	Fr.	Pompano Beach, Fla. (Blanche Ely HS)
Cain Jefferson #	DE	6-3	210	Fr.	Decatur, Ga. (Columbia HS)
Brandon Joseph II	DL	6-3	290	Fr.	Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. (St. Thomas Aquinas HS)
Ilija Krajnovic #	OL	6-7	325	R-Sr.	Zrenjanin, Serbia (Boston College / IMG Academy)
Jordan Martin-Durham #	QB	6-3	215	Fr.	Jacksonville, Fla. (Zarephath Academy)
Joel Mintze	S	6-0	195	Fr.	Delray Beach, Fla. (Miami Norland HS)
Vito Moriana-Sigel #	OL	6-5	300	Jr.	Estepona, Spain (Trinity Valley CC / Mississippi Valley State / Kiski School)
Antwan Moore	WR	6-1	175	Fr.	Miami, Fla. (North Miami HS)
Josh Perry	RB	6-0	200	Fr.	Orlando, Fla. (Edgewater HS)
Christian Robbins	CB	6-0	170	Fr.	Orlando, Fla. (Jones HS)
Michael Rossin	CB	6-0	185	Fr.	Suwannee, Fla. (Suwannee HS)
Renard Smith #	OL	6-4	320	R-So.	Dallas, Ga. (University of Pikeville / East Paulding HS)
Kha'leal Sterling	WR	5-9	170	Fr.	Miami, Fla. (Miami Central HS)
La'Charles Taylor #	OL	6-4	320	R-Jr.	Sanford, Fla. (North Alabama / Allen University / Seminole HS)
Josiah Thomas #	TE	6-2	200	Fr.	Austin, Texas (Lake Travis HS)
Jordan Thompson #	LB	5-11	215	R-So.	Charlotte, N.C. (Middle Tennessee / Julius Chambers HS)
Marcus Trout	PK	5-11	170	Fr.	Cocoa, Fla. (Cocoa HS)
Trey Walker	WR	5-10	170	Fr.	Hoschton, Ga. (Mill Creek HS)

- Enrolled at WCU during the Spring 2025 semester, expected to go through annual spring drills

★★★ RECRUITS:

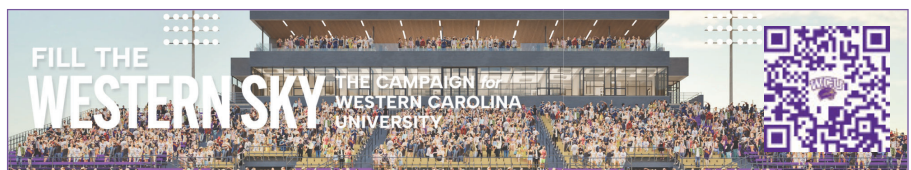
Anthony Benjamin, WR – 247Sports
Devin Brown, CB – Rivals
Cole Cooke, OL – 247Sports *
Cam'Ron Dabney, CB – 247Sports
Brandon Joseph II, DL – 247Sports
Ilija Krajnovic, OL – ESPN & 247Sports
Josh Perry, RB – Rivals
Kha'leal Sterling, WR – 247Sports *

★★ RECRUITS:

Cole Cooke, OL – Rivals *
Kha'leal Sterling, WR – Rivals *



THIS IS CATAMOUNT COUNTRY





CATAMOUNT FOOTBALL STAFF

Kerwin Bell	Head Coach
Jerry Odom	Assistant Coach / Defensive Coordinator
Rylan Wells	Assistant Coach / Offensive Coordinator
Kerry Webb	Assistant Coach / Special Tms Coordinator
Brian Cochran	Assistant Coach / Defensive Line
Kyle Dickey	Assistant Coach / Tight Ends
Malik Goodman	Assistant Coach / Safeties
Jeremy King	Assistant Coach / Offensive Line
Greg McGruder	Assistant Coach / Wide Receivers
Larry Murphy	Assistant Coach / Cornerbacks / Assistant Special Teams Coordinator
Rudi Small	Assistant Coach / Running Backs / Assistant Special Teams Coordinator
Jeff Burger	Football Quality Control – Offense
Eván Dvorchik	Football Quality Control – Defense
Todd Shealy	Director of Football Operations
Corey Headley	Director of Player Personnel
Brian Berghelm	Player Personnel Analyst
Maggie Mullen	Director of Recruiting
Steven Honbarger	Director of Sports Medicine
Sharon Wilson	Associate Athletic Trainer
Andrew Bates	Director of Sports Performance
Mike Taylor	Head Athletic Equipment Manager
Andrue Smith	Assistant Athletic Equipment Manager



TENTATIVE CATAMOUNT FOOTBALL 2025 SPRING PRACTICE SCHEDULE:

MARCH

Monday, March 3 – Practice 1

Tuesday, March 4 – Practice 2

Thursday, March 6 – Practice 3

SPRING BREAK – MARCH 10–14

Monday, March 17 – Practice 4

Tuesday, March 18 – Practice 5

Thursday, March 20 – Practice 6

Saturday, March 22 – Practice 7

Tuesday, March 25 – Practice 8

Thursday, March 27 – Practice 9

Friday, March 28 – Practice 10

Saturday, March 29 – Practice 11

Tuesday, April 1 – Practice 12

Thursday, April 3 – Practice 13

Friday, April 4 – Practice 14

Saturday, April 5 – Practice 15 – Noon

(SPRING GAME)

Unless otherwise noted, each WCU spring football practice is open to the public. It is respectfully requested, though, that spectators observe from the stadium seating area and avoid being either on the field or the sidelines.



CATAMOUNT CLUB

2025 CATAMOUNT FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

AUG 30	SEPT 06	SEPT 13	SEPT 20 FAMILY WEEKEND	SEPT 27	OCT 04	OCT 11	OCT 18	NOV 01	NOV 8 HOMECOMING	NOV 15	NOV 22
WCU	WCU	WCU	WCU	WCU	WCU	WCU	WCU	WCU	WCU	WCU	WCU

2025 SEASON TICKETS ON-SALE NOW
CATAMOUNTSPORTS.COM

■ HOME GAMES
□ AWAY GAMES

CULLOWHEE, N.C. – Twelve games for a second-consecutive season, equally split between E.J. Whitmire Stadium / Bob Waters Field and six road contests that include four in Southern Conference play and a pair of in-state nonconference matchups highlight Western Carolina's 2025 Catamount football schedule that was finalized and officially released back on Jan. 13, 2025.

Kickoff times and additional game day promotions for WCU's six home dates, as well as a full broadcast schedule, will be announced later. All nine SoCon schools are slated to broadcast home games on ESPN+, if not selected for national or regional broadcast.

Riding the momentum from its third-consecutive winning season – its longest string since three in a row from 1992 through 1994 – and a second-straight seven-win campaign, the Catamounts will enjoy six home games on their 2025 schedule, the most at E.J. Whitmire Stadium / Bob Waters Field since 2019.

WCU welcomes a pair of nonconference foes to Cullowhee in regional rival Gardner-Webb for the season-opener on Saturday, Aug. 30, and Elon in the backend of the home-and-home on Sept 13. The Catamounts upset No. 22 Elon last season in Elon, N.C., while the Runnin' Bulldogs visit western North Carolina for the first time since 2019.

Between the two home dates, Western Carolina travels down I-40 for a weekend meeting with first-year head coach Jake Dickert and Wake Forest out of the Atlantic Coast Conference on Sept. 6. The fourth all-time series meeting between the Catamounts and Demon Deacons at Allegacy Federal Credit Union Stadium is the first since 1991 with the two other meetings coming in the 1982 and 1983 seasons.

Western Carolina opens Southern Conference play at home as it welcomes the Samford Bulldogs to Cullowhee on WCU's Family Weekend slated for Sept. 20. The Catamounts scored a historic 47-42 road win over the Bulldogs in Birmingham back in November, halting a 10-game winless drought on the road in the series with the first series road victory since 1969. The Catamounts have won two straight over Samford, claiming the 2023 home meeting 30-7.

Before closing the season with seven straight league games, WCU plays its final nonconference game of the regular season in the return matchup with Campbell in the first-ever meeting in Buies Creek. The Catamounts look to avenge last year's 24-16 home defeat in the program's first NCAA Division I meeting.

Beginning on Saturday, Oct. 4, and interrupted only by the team's scheduled bye week on Oct. 25, the Catamounts play seven SoCon games including four on the road and three at home. In addition to the Samford game, Western Carolina's favorable home schedule includes a visit from chromatic rival Furman on Oct. 11 in the lone home game in October. Back-to-back home dates in November have Mercer (Nov. 8) coming to Cullowhee for the 2025 Homecoming game before the regular-season home finale in the mountain-rivalry match-up with ETSU for the "Blue Ridge Border Battle" trophy game on Nov. 15.

WCU's bye week is sandwiched between road games in opposite directions as the Purple & Gold heads to the South Carolina Lowcountry to meet The Citadel in Charleston on Oct. 18 before traveling to the Scenic City of Chattanooga, Tenn., to face the Mocs on Saturday, Nov. 1. The Catamounts conclude the 2025 regular season on the road in Lexington, Va., seeking a 12th series victory away from home in the 16th matchup at Foster Stadium.

SoCon games commence on Saturday, Sept. 6, in a battle of the Bulldogs as The Citadel visits Samford in Birmingham, Ala. Wofford hosts defending league champion Mercer on Sept. 13, before a two-game slate on Saturday, Sept. 20, as Mercer visits The Citadel and the Catamounts host Samford coming off last year's thriller in the regular-season finale on the road.

The league's first full slate of games comes on Oct. 4 as four SoCon games will take place with each Saturday from Oct. 18 to Nov. 15 to also feature four head-to-head SoCon games. Regular-season play wraps up for all nine SoCon squads on Saturday, Nov. 22, with the opening round of the FCS playoffs starting the following weekend. Three league games are set for the final day of the regular season.

The unofficial opening of the 2025 SoCon football schedule begins with SoCon Media Day on **Tuesday, July 22, 2025**, at the Hotel Hartlage in Greenville, S.C. *Additional details regarding the event will be released on a future date.*

Season tickets for Western Carolina's six-game 2025 home schedule at E.J. Whitmire Stadium / Bob Waters Field remain on sale through the Catamount Athletics ticket office, located on the first floor of the Ramsey Center, by phone at (828) 227-2401, or online at CatamountSports.com/BuyTickets.

For returning season ticket holders, the **2025 renewal deadline is Wednesday, April 30**. Catamount Club members who had a season parking pass last season may also be renewed at this time. The cost is \$60. For those looking to get a pass in the Catamount Club season parking lots for the first time or those looking to change their parking location, please contact CJ Mitchell in the Catamount Club at (828) 227-3047 or by email at mitchellc@wcu.edu.

Catamount Club members are also reminded to renew their annual membership to take advantage of pregame hospitality perks by Monday, June 30, 2025.

Since 2014, Western Carolina has ranked among the Top 30 in NCAA FCS football for home attendance nine times including five seasons among the Top 25. For a third-straight season, WCU is coming off a record year for football season ticket sales in both tickets sold and revenue generated.