



WESTERN CAROLINA

2026 CATAMOUNT FOOTBALL | GAME NOTES

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WESTERN CAROLINA ATHLETICS MEDIA RELATIONS /// RAMSEY CENTER – 92 CATAMOUNT ROAD /// @CATAMOUNTS /// CATAMOUNTSPORTS.COM

• CATAMOUNT QUICK FACTS •

Location: Cullowhee, N.C., 28723
..... Pronounced "KULL - oh - whee"
Founded: 1889
Enrollment: 12,308 (Fall 2026)
Nickname: Catamounts
Colors: Purple & Gold
Stadium: E.J. Whitmire Stadium (14,000)
Field: Bob Waters Field (Artificial: TenCate Pivot)
Affiliation: NCAA Div. I – Championship Subdivision (FCS)
Conference: The Southern Conference (SoCon)
Chancellor: Dr. Kelli R. Brown (Toledo, 1982)
Athletics Director: Kyle Pifer (Francis Marion, 1999)
Senior Woman Administrator: Ashleigh Simmons (ULM, 2014)

FOOTBALL HISTORY:

First Year of Football: 1931
Seasons of Football: 91st
All-Time / SoCon Record: 379-547-23 (.411) / 137-204-3 (.401)
NCAA Postseason Appearances (Div. I): 2 (1)
Postseason Record (Div. I): 3-2 (3-1)
Best Finish: 1983 National Finalist (lost 43-7 to So. Illinois)
Last Appearance: 1983
2025 Record: 7-5 (.583) (Home: 2-4 | Away: 5-1)
2025 SoCon Record (Finish): 6-2 (2nd) (Home: 2-2 | Away: 4-0)

WCU FOOTBALL COACHING STAFF:

Head Coach: Kerwin Bell (Florida, 1987)
• Head Coaching Record at WCU: 32-26 (.552, 6th yr)
• Overall Record: 125-68 (.648, 18 yrs)

ASSISTANT COACHES / SUPPORT STAFF

Rylan Wells Offensive Coord. / Recruiting Coord. / QBs
Nick Reveiz Defensive Coordinator
Kerry Webb Special Teams Coordinator
Mike Welch Assistant Coach / Defensive Line
Kyle Dickey Assistant Coach / Tight Ends
Malik Goodman Assistant Coach / Safeties
Malik Chevy Assistant Coach / Cornerbacks
Parish Metzger Assistant Coach / Quarterbacks
Jeremy King Assistant Coach / Offensive Line
Corey Headley Assistant Coach / Wide Receivers
Rudi Small Assistant Coach / Running Backs
Evan Dvorchik Director of Player Personnel – (Special Tms)
Nick Back Quality Control Coach – Offense (Asst. OL)
Jeremiah Judd Quality Control Coach – Offense (Asst. WR/TE)
Joseph Kieser Quality Control Coach – Defense (Asst. CBs)
Cale Matthews Quality Control Coach – Offense (Asst. WRs)
Austin Shealy Quality Control Coach – Defense (Asst. LBs)
Todd Shealy General Manager & Director of Football Ops
Braden Erwin Asst. General Manager
Madelyn Lee Director of Recruiting
Bailey Johnson Football Video Coordinator
Andrew Bates Director of Sports Performance

WESTERN CAROLINA MEDIA RELATIONS INFORMATION:

Associate AD/Media Relations (FB Contact): Daniel Hooker
• Email Address: dhooker@email.wcu.edu
• Office / Cell Phone: (828) 227-2339 / (828) 508-2494
Director of Media Relations (Secondary FB): Greg Hartlage
• Email Address: ghartlage@email.wcu.edu
Director of Media Relations: Joshua Ragsdale
• Email Address: jragdale@email.wcu.edu
Director of Video Operations: Roman Uglehus
Asst. Director of Video Operations: Rob Burlington
Football Press Box Phone: (828) 227-2116
Athletics Mailing & Overnight Address: WCU Athletics
92 Catamount Road – Ramsey Center
Cullowhee, N.C. 28723



GM2: 24/RV WESTERN CAROLINA CATAMOUNTS (1-0) at RV CAMPBELL FIGHTING CAMELS (1-0)

Sat., Sept. 5, 2026 • 3:30 pm • FloCollege / Catamount Sports Network • Buies Creek, N.C. • Barker-Lane Stadium (5,500)

GAME COVERAGE:

BROADCAST:

TV TALENT: Chris Hemeyer & Milton Brown
RADIO: Catamount Sports Network
RADIO TALENT: Gary Ayers, Daniel Hooker & Jeff Bryson
ONLINE AUDIO: www.CatamountSports.com
TWITTER: @Catamounts, @CatamountsFB
SERIES HISTORY: WCU trails, 1-3 (W-1)
In Cullowhee: WCU trails, 0-3 (L-3) MR: L, 24-16 (2024)
In Buies Creek, N.C.: WCU leads, 1-0 (W-1) MR: W, 42-35 (2025)



FLOCOLLEGE



WESTERN CAROLINA CATAMOUNTS

Head Coach: Kerwin Bell
Record at WCU: 32-26, 6th yr
Career Record: 125-68, 18th yr

CAMPBELL FIGHTING CAMELS

Head Coach: Braxton Harris
Record at CU: 6-19, 3rd yr
Career Record: 19-47, 7th yr

2026 CATAMOUNT FOOTBALL SCHEDULE / RESULTS

DATE	OPPONENT	SITE	TIME / SCORE	TV	NOTES
AUG. 29	EASTERN KENTUCKY	CULLOWHEE	W, 45-21	ESPN+	Catamounts rallied from 14-10 halftime deficit, outscored ECU 35-7 in 2nd half
Sept. 5	at Campbell	Buies Creek, N.C.	3:30 pm	FloCollege	Return trip to Buies Creek after 1st series win last year; Campbell "White Out"
Sept. 12	at Cincinnati	Cincinnati, Ohio	7 pm	ESPN+	2nd all-time series meeting, first since 2005 – a 7-3 Cincy win
SEPT. 19	PRESBYTERIAN (FW)	CULLOWHEE	2:30 pm	ESPN+	"White Out Whitmire" on Family Weekend; WCU has won 10 of last 11 meetings
Sept. 26	at ETSU * (BRBB)	Johnson City, Tenn.	3:30 pm	Nexstar/E+	Blue Ridge Border Battle; ETSU retained possession of "the Rock" last year
OCT. 3	TENNESSEE TECH* (AW)	CULLOWHEE	6 pm	Nexstar/E+	WCU Football Alumni weekend, first meeting since 2000 and first in SoCon
Oct. 10	at Mercer *	Macon, Ga.	3 pm	ESPN+	WCU looks to put the clamps on a 10-game series slide since 2016
OCT. 24	CHATTANOOGA * (HC)	CULLOWHEE	2:30 pm	Nexstar/E+	Homecoming; WCU has won four-straight, decided by an average of four pts
Oct. 31	at Furman *	Greenville, S.C.	2 pm	Nexstar/E+	Battle for Purple Supremacy; The Cats outscored Furman 104-27 in last two
NOV. 7	WOFFORD * (HERO/EBCI)	CULLOWHEE	1 pm	ESPN+	Catamounts have won five straight, last four in one-possession games
Nov. 14	at Samford *	Birmingham, Ala.	3 pm	ESPN+	WCU with three-game series win streak, longest in series history vs. SAM
NOV. 21	THE CITADEL * (SD)	CULLOWHEE	1 pm	ESPN+	WCU has won five of the last six meetings, including three-straight

* denotes Southern Conference game /// All times listed are Eastern

A WESTERN CAROLINA WIN WOULD:

- Give the Catamounts their first 2-0 season start since the Mark Speir-led 2018 squad, which opened 3-0 ... It'd be the best start under head coach Kerwin Bell;
- Extend WCU's road winning streak to SIX-straight games dating back to last season – and mark WCU's SEVENTH-straight win over NCAA FCS opposition;
- Mark just the SECOND series victory for WCU over Campbell all-time, and a second-straight road win;

A WESTERN CAROLINA LOSS WOULD:

- Relegate the Catamounts to a 1-1 seasonal record;
- Halt the program's road winning streak at five-straight, suffering the first road loss since falling at Wake Forest in 2025;
- Make WCU 1-4 in the all-time series against Campbell – and 1-2 against the Fighting Camels in the modern era since Campbell brought football back in 2008.

CATAMOUNT QUICK SLANTS:

- Western Carolina's 2026 football roster features players from 13 different states and the District of Columbia, with a pair of international students from Ireland and Spain ... A combined 45 of the student-athletes are from Florida and 30 hailing from North Carolina ... Georgia is represented by 18 players and South Caro-

lina has 10 on roster. The others include Illinois (2) and one from Alabama, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Virginia;

- With the NCAA's new participation models, this year's Catamount roster is predominantly underclassmen, featuring 32 freshmen and 35 sophomores (57%) ... the Catamounts have 25 juniors, eight seniors, and 17 players in their fifth-year of competition;

WCU BY THE NUMBERS:

- 28 wins since 2022 (best 4-year stretch in program history)
- 4 consecutive winning seasons
- 3 straight seven-win campaigns
- 5 consecutive 5,000-yard offensive seasons
- Nearly \$40 million in home facility enhancements
- The Catamount "pro-spread" offense has amassed 5,000 yards of total offense for five straight seasons, rewriting the program record books ... WCU passed for over 4,000 yards in back-to-back seasons, including a program benchmark 4,268 in 2025 ... Since 2021 during the **KERWIN BELL** coaching era in Cullowhee, the **Catamounts LEAD the FCS with an average of 485.1 offensive yards per game;**
- A combined 11 WCU football players SHARE a combined nine LAST names with just one set of brothers*:
DAVIS Da'Shawn (DL), Derrick (RB), Michael (WR)
JONES Braylon (S), Roman (TE)
McIVER Aaron (OL), Brayson (OL) *
WADDELL Beady (LB), Davis (TE)
YOUNG Caleb (S), Jake (TE)

THIS WEEK IN CATAMOUNT FOOTBALL /// AUG. 31 – SEPT. 6

31 Monday	1 Tuesday	2 Wednesday	3 Thursday	4 Friday	5 Saturday	6 Sunday
CATAMOUNT FOOTBALL WEEKLY – 6 PM Coaches Show @ Catamount Jaxe <i>Facebook LIVE and YouTube</i> PRACTICE: 7 pm	MEETINGS: 2:30 pm PRACTICE: 4:30 - 6:30 pm (full)	MEETINGS: 2:30 pm PRACTICE: 4:30 - 6:30 pm (uppers) MEDIA AVAILABILITY 4:15 PM	ESPN+ Broadcast Announcers Call 9:15 am MEETINGS: 2:30 pm PRACTICE: 4:30 - 6:30 pm (uppers)	TRAVEL DAY Noon departure No Media Availability	GAME DAY Western Carolina at Campbell 3:30 pm Buies Creek, NC Bell & requested players available after the game	PRACTICE: OFF DAY

WCU INTERVIEW POLICY

Western Carolina's Office of Athletics Media Relations will assist media personnel with interview requests of Catamount student-athletes, coaches and administrators. To arrange interviews, please contact **DANIEL HOOKER**, the Associate Athletic Director for Media Relations at least 24 hours in advance.

Head Coach **KERWIN BELL** will be available for interviews following each practice and following games – Wednesday's practice is the best media availability. Other interviews with Coach Bell must be set-up in advance and it is requested that the nature of the interview be submitted to WCU Media Relations in writing at least 24 hours prior.

Student-athletes will be available for interviews after practices through Wednesday. Unless special permission is granted well in advance, the cut-off time for student-athletes during game weeks will be Noon on Thursday.

WCU FOOTBALL PRACTICE POLICY

WCU football practices in 2024 are open to the public – though it is respectfully requested that attendees watch from the stands and avoid being on the field. Media members are asked to refrain from contacting student-athletes at their home or residence – and student-athletes' phone numbers will not be released by the Media Relations Office. Out-of-town media may set up phone interviews to be conducted in the Department of Athletics. Coach Bell may be reached weekday mornings, however, it is asked that a specific interview time be scheduled through the Media Relations office.

POSTGAME INTERVIEWS

The WCU locker room is CLOSED postgame. However, following a 10 minute "cooling off" period, head coach Kerwin Bell and requested players will be brought to the media room on the first floor of the Ramsey Center.

The availability of the visiting locker room will be announced in the press box after conferring with the visiting SID. The visiting locker room is located in the back portion of the Jordan-Phillips Field House. A space for interviews will be available outside the locker room or up on the Field House patio, if available.

WORKING CREDENTIALS

Media representatives planning to cover football games at Western Carolina University are asked to request in written form (e-mail) working credentials from WCU's Media Relations Office. Season passes will be issued to those who cover the Catamounts on a permanent basis. Our limited working space in the press box will be assigned by priority to WCU beat writers, beat writers of the opponents, metropolitan media filing for deadline and specialty publications.

Credentials are assigned by zones and will outline designated areas of the stadium the pass will allow the bearer.

If time permits, credentials will be mailed. If not, credentials can be picked up on game day (*two hours prior to kickoff*) at the media will call either with the parking attendant at the St. David's Church Lot or in the Larry & Mary Arbaugh Atrium in the Phillips Football Center. Credentials will be issued only to those attending the game in a working capacity – spouses, dates, children and other nonworkers will not be permitted in the press box.

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Credentials for sideline photographers will be issued on a first-come, first-serve basis with agencies covering the participating schools on a regular basis receiving priority. Free-lance photographers may request credentials on a game-by-game basis. All free-lance photographers must submit proofs featuring game or sideline action to the Media Relations Office no later than four days following the game. Each photographer must pick up a photo pass from the press box or media will call prior to the game.

PHOTOGRAPHERS, VIDEOGRAPHERS & OTHER MEDIA PERSONNEL ARE NOT PERMITTED TO STOP OR STAND IN THE TEAM AREAS – PLEASE KEEP MOVING

MEDIA PARKING

Media parking for Western Carolina football home games is available in a designated parking areas – **BY PERMIT ONLY** – in the **ST. DAVID'S CHURCH PARKING LOT** located directly behind the East Side of E.J. Whitmire Stadium on Forest Hills Road. Media wishing to obtain media parking for

a home game in Cullowhee must contact the WCU Office of Athletics Media Relations in advance for more information on credential availability.

Entry to the St. David's Church Parking lot will be managed by a member of the WCU Athletics game day support staff, granting access with St. David's Church Lot passes and through a checklist of those authorized to park in the lot.

PRESS RELEASES/STATISTICS

The WCU Media Relations Department produces a weekly football release prior to each game during the season. Cumulative statistics will be updated as soon as possible after each contest. Media members may receive the releases and statistics by accessing the Athletics Department web site at www.CatamountSports.com.

CATAMOUNTS ON THE WEB

The WCU football home page at CatamountSports.com provides the latest information regarding the Catamounts, including updated statistics, a roster, game notes and press releases. Also on the department's main site is information on all of WCU athletics programs, lodging, directions to campus and the latest local weather forecast.

All the current data you need on the Catamounts is as close as your computer at **CatamountSports.com**.

Follow Catamount Athletics on Twitter: @Catamounts
Follow Catamount Football on Twitter: @CatamountsFB



CATAMOUNT SPORTS NETWORK 2026 FOOTBALL AFFILIATES:

105.7 FM / 540 AM WRGCSylva
104.9 FM / 1050 AM WFSCFranklin
1310 AM WISE Sports RadioAsheville
103.9 FM WBRMMarion

Streaming Audio Online at
CatamountSports.com

FOUR radio station affiliates across six frequencies in North Carolina are set to carry broadcasts of the **CATAMOUNT SPORTS NETWORK** during Western Carolina's 2026 football season. CSN has also partnered with Sidearm Sports to provide unlimited streaming audio through the athletics website, CatamountSports.com.

2026 BROADCAST CREW (HOME)

Play-by-Play: Gary Ayers
Color Analyst: Daniel Hooker / Jeff Bryson
Host / Producer: Jeff Bryson

2026 BROADCAST CREW (ROAD)

Play-by-Play: Gary Ayers
Color Analyst: Daniel Hooker
Host / Producer: Jeff Bryson



STORY LINES & NOTES ENTERING SATURDAY'S GAME AT CAMPBELL:

► **LOOKING BACK:** Western Carolina is coming off its first season-opening victory since a 52-38 road win over Charleston Southern back in 2022 ... the win over Eastern Kentucky was WCU's first season-opening win at HOME since a 33-26 win over Newberry back in 2018 – and the program's first season-opening home victory over an NCAA Division I team since a 23-3 victory over Liberty (then still in the NCAA FCS) on Aug. 31, 2002;

► **SPINNING 45s:** Western Carolina has posted 45 points in its season opener in each of the past two seasons - winning 45-21 in 2026 against ECU and falling to Gardner-Webb last season, 52-45, at home;

► **START FAST:** Western Carolina football seeks its first 2-0 start for the first time since 2018, when the Mark Speir-led Catamounts opened 3-0 with wins over Newberry (33-26), at Gardner-Webb (28-10), and VMI (52-50) ... A 2-0 start would mark the best under head coach Kerwin Bell in his six seasons in Cullowhee ... Dating back to last season, the Catamounts are on a two-game win streak;

► **ON THE ROAD AGAIN:** Western Carolina carries a five-game road winning streak into Buies Creek on Saturday, a streak that started with last year's 42-35 road win over Campbell ... the lone road loss last season came at NCAA FBS-foe, Wake Forest ... Dating back to 2024, the Catamounts have won SIX-straight games against NCAA FCS competition, starting with the 47-42 shootout win at Samford (Nov. 23, 2024) in the season finale;

► Illinois State enters the weekend with the nation's longest road win streak at nine games, followed by Lehigh (7), with WCU, Montana State, and Villanova each tied with five-straight wins.

► **DUELING OFFENSIVE PLAYERS OF THE WEEK:** Both WCU quarterback **LEX THOMAS** and Campbell signal caller **KAMDEN SIXKILLER** earned their respective conferences' Offensive Player of the Week awards last week after their Week Zero performances:

- Thomas accounted for 389 yards of offense, including 320 passing yards with three touchdowns on 27-of-35 passing, adding a team-best 69 rushing yards and a game-sealing 15-yard score;
- Sixkiller combined for 438 yards and four scores, passing for 343 yards on 29-of-42 passing with two TDs, while rushing for 95 yards and a pair of scores;
- Sixkiller added the Stats Perform FCS National Offensive Player of the Week honors to his ledger earlier in the week.

► **TROUBLE WITH NUMBERS:** Dating back to 2023, Western Carolina has **dropped its last 10 games as a nationally-ranked NCAA FCS team** ... WCU's last victory when entering a game with a number affixed next to its name came in the "Blue Ridge Border Battle" with ETSU when the No. 17 Catamounts dismantled the Buccaneers, 58-7, at home on Nov. 11, 2023:

DATE	OPPONENT – SCORE	(RANK) WCU – SCORE
Nov. 15, 2025	ETSU – 52	(25/RV) Western Carolina – 35
Nov. 8, 2025	(10/12) Mercer 49	(24/24) Western Carolina 47
Sept. 6, 2025	Wake Forest – 42	(25/RV) Western Carolina – 10
Aug. 30, 2025	Gardner-Webb – 52	(19/18) Western Carolina – 45
Nov. 9, 2024	(RV) ETSU – 24	(22) Western Carolina – 21
Oct. 26, 2024	(14) Mercer – 44	(24) Western Carolina – 34
Sept. 21, 2024	(10) Montana – 46	(24) Western Carolina – 35
Sept. 7, 2024	Campbell – 24	(17) Western Carolina 16
Aug. 29, 2024	(24 FBS) NC State – 38	(20) Western Carolina – 21
Nov. 18, 2023	VMI – 27	(14) Western Carolina – 24

► WESTERN CAROLINA VS. CAMPBELL – ALL-TIME SERIES:

Officially, the Catamounts and Camels meet for the fifth time in the history of the series that dates to 1937, with WCU trailing 1-3 ... However, the series lay dormant from 1939 until it was rekindled in 2024, 16 years after Campbell revived its program in 2008;

► Saturday marks the THIRD series meeting in the modern NCAA Division I era, with both teams having earned a road win in the past two seasons – Campbell, 24-16, in 2024 and WCU, 42-35, in 2025.

► WESTERN CAROLINA VS. THE COASTAL ATHLETIC CONFERENCE (CAA):

Catamount football has only played FOUR of the current 13 teams in the new-look CAA, including Campbell (1-4), former league foe Elon (18-25-2), Maine (1-0) back in 1977, and in-state foe North Carolina A&T (2-2) ... WCU is a combined 22-31-2 all-time against teams currently in the league, which saw Villanova and William & Mary exit for the Patriot League after last season.

ADDITIONAL 2026 TEAM BREAKDOWN:

STARTERS RETURNING: 8 – (5 offense – 1 defense – 2 specialists)

OFFENSE (5):	DEFENSE (1):
AJ Colombo (2024) WR	Ken Moore Jr. DB
Steven Hamby OL	
Aaron Sanez OL	
Zach Watson OL	
Jake Young (2024) TE	

SPECIALISTS (2):

Marcus Trout PK	Bryan McCollum PK
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STARTERS LOST: 12 – (8 offense – 5 defense – 1 specialist)

OFFENSE (8):	DEFENSE (10):
Brayden Blackmon TE	Jahleel Anderson DE
Patrick Boyd Jr. RB	Cam'Ron Dabney CB
Evan Carney OL	Samaurie Dukes CB
Taron Dickens QB	Caleb Fisher DE
Dominic Dutton WR	Hayward McQueen LB
Malik Knight WR	Kenyon Partridge DL
Manasseh Ripert OL	Bo Simpson-Nealy S
James Tyre WR	Hasaan Sykes CB
	Jordan Thompson LB
	Jamichael Wilson DL

SPECIALISTS (2):

Stephen Brantley P	Emmet Rhoades LS
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ADDITIONAL RETURNERS (57, Italics DNP in 2025): Secrea Algje, OL; Nassor Ashenafi, DB; Vanier Baptiste III, DT; Braeden Barger, LB; Anthony Benjamin, RB; *Trey Berry III, LB; Noah Best, RB; Hank Bodine, LB; Jai Boyd, WR; Devin Brown, DB; Bode Burns, TE; J'veon Bush, OL; Ellis Chappell, WR; Marlin Cochran, RB; Ellis Chappell, WR; Joshua Collins, LB; Cole Cooke, OL; Aidan Cooper, OL; Jayden Cornelius, CB; Cole Craddock, TE; Austin Cunningham, WR; Nicholas Foster, OL; Ian Grissom, QB; Thomas Guerrero, P; John Hammond, OL; Bryce Hart, LB; Konrad Henderson, OL; Chris Hobbs, CB; Richard Hollis, WR; Cain Jefferson, DE; Jeremy Johnson II, DL; Brandon Joseph II, DL; Matthew Keener, WR; Isaac Lee, QB; Jordan Martin-Durham, DE; Nolan McClanahan, LB; Camden McGill, CB; Ryan McKinnis, LB; Isaac McLellan, TE; Jaden Meeks, DL; AJ Mintze, DB; Blue Monroe, LB; Vito Moriana-Sigel, OL; Josh Perry, RB; Julian Quintero, DB; Jemarius Reaves, WR; Christian Robbins, CB; Michael Rossin, WR; Gavin Rowell, DE; Na'koma Simpson-Nealy, DB; Renard Smith, OL; Kha'leal Sterling, WR; Adrian Stone, DL; Marcus Striggles, WR; Marseille Taylor, CB; Beady Waddell V, LB; Trey Walker, WR.*

WESTERN CAROLINA – NOTES ENTERING 2026:

► **TRENDING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION:** Western Carolina won seven games in 2025 giving the Catamounts three-consecutive seven-win seasons ... WCU posted a final record above .500 for the fourth-straight season ... It was WCU's sixth seven-win season over the past 12 years – and third in three seasons (2014, 2015, 2017, 2023, 2024, 2025);

► WCU is riding the momentum of its fourth-consecutive winning season – (6-5 in 2023; 7-4 in 2024; 7-5 in 2024; 7-5 in 2025) – matching the program's longest string since 1976-79 (6-4 in 1976; 6-4-1 in 1977; 6-5 in 1978; 6-5 in 1979);

► The past four seasons have been the **BEST FOUR-YEAR STRETCH** in Western Carolina football history, as the Catamounts have won **28 games** since 2022, usurping the 24 win stretch from 1976-79.

► **CATAMOUNTS ENTER THE NATIONAL RANKINGS:** After receiving votes in both pre-season polls, the Catamounts enter the Stats Perform FCS Top 25 entering Week One, while remaining on slot out of the AFCA Coaches Poll – first in the "others receiving votes" to rank 26th nationally;

► The Southern Conference placed three teams in this week's Stats Perform FCS Top 25. Tennessee Tech climbed from No. 14 to No. 12, while Mercer moved up two spots from No. 21 to No. 19. Western Carolina debuted at No. 24, while Chattanooga also received votes;

► Two SoCon teams remained ranked in the AFCA FCS Coaches Poll, with Tennessee Tech at No. 13 and Mercer at No. 15. Western Carolina joined Wofford, Furman, Chattanooga, and ETSU among teams receiving votes. Saturday's opponent, Campbell (1-0), also garnered six votes.

2026 CATAMOUNT FOOTBALL PRONUNCIATION GUIDE:

0 ^(A) AJ COLOMBO	WR	cuh - LUMM - bo	38 Jayden JOSELIN	S	JOSS - uh - lynn
1 ^(A) JAI Boyd	WR	juh - EYE	41 BEADY WADDELL V	LB	BEE - dee WAD - dell
2 ^(A) NAKOMA Simpson	S	nuh - COMB - uh	43 BRAEDEN BARGER	LB	BRAY - den BARR - jurr
4 ^(A) KHA'LEAL Sterling	WR	kuh - LEEL	46 Noah McCLANAHAN	LB	mick - CLAN - uh - han
5 ^(A) Michael ROSSIN	WR	ROSS - sin	50 Xavier NOCCO	LS	NAH - koh (like taco)
7 ^(A) MARSEILLE Taylor	DB	marr - SAY	51 Aaron SANEZ	OL	SAN - ez
8 ^(A) Ryan McKINNIS	LB	mick - KEN - us	52 Brayson McIVER	OL	mick - KEY - vurr
9 ^(A) BODE Burns	TE	BO - dee	55 SECREA ALGIE	OL	suh - CRAY AL - gee
9 ^(A) ELDRICK Robinson II	LB	EL - drick	56 Aaron McIVER	OL	mick - KEY - vurr
10 ^(A) SANTANA Carlos	WR	san - TAN - nuh	58 Isaac BOULGER	OL	BOWL - jurr
10 ^(A) JABARI McWilliams	DL	juh - BAR - ree	60 Bryan McCOLLUM	K	mick - CALL - uhm
11 ^(A) Marco PATIERNO	LB	puh - TURN - no	63 Thomas GUERRERO	P/H	gurr - RARE - roh
12 ^(A) Julian QUINTERO	S	quin - TAIR - oh	67 Steven HAMBY	OL	HAM - bee
13 ^(A) Richard HOLLIS	WR	HALL - liss	68 AIDAN Cooper	OL	AY - den
14 ^(A) VANIER BAPTISTE III	DT	vuh - NEER BAPT - teest	72 Andrew THREATT	OL	like street or eat
15 ^(A) Hank BODINE	LB	bo - DEEN	73 Colin McCLELLAN	OL	mick - CLELL - luhn
17 ^(A) JATORIAN Mack	S	jah - TORE - e - uhn	75 RENARD Smith	OL	ruh - NARD
18 ^(A) Matthew KEENER	WR	KEY - nurr	78 J'VEON Bush	DL	JAY - vee - on
18 ^(A) TRYSTIAN Anderson	DL	TRISS - tuhn	79 VITO MORIANA-SIGEL	OL	Veto more-e-AHN-no ZEE-gull
19 ^(A) MOUHAMADOU Mane	WR	moe - HAH - muh - doo	82 DAVON Washington	WR	DAY - vahn
20 JADARIUS DOBIE	RB	juh - DARE - e - us DOUGH - bee	84 JEMARIOUS Reeves	WR	juh - MARR - e - us
21 ^(A) NAS ASHENAFI	DB	NOZ osh - SEEN - ah - fee	86 Davis WADDELL	TE	WAH - dell
24 ^(A) TERRELL POYSER	CB	turr - RELL POI - surr	89 Ellis CHAPPELL	WR	like chapel
27 ^(A) JERMIYAH Douglas	SPUR	jer - uh - MY - uh	90 DA'SHAWN Davis	BAN	DAY - shawn
31 ALANT'E Reese	S	al - LAHN - tay	91 JAKOBY Diamond	DL	juh - COE - bee
32 A.J. MINTZE	S	like mints	94 MALACHI Hill	DL	MAL - uh - kye
33 Gavin ROWELL	DL	RAWL	97 Fernando JEANTY	DL	JENN - tee
37 DEVON Wilson Jr.	CB	duh - VAHN	98 AIDEN Black	DL	AYE - den

WHO'S UP; WHO'S DOWN

POSITION COACHES ON THE FIELD:

Kerwin BellHead Coach

OFFENSE:

Rylan Welles Offensive Coordinator

Kyle Dickey Tight Ends

Jeremy King Offensive Line

Parish Metzger Quarterbacks

Rudi Small Running Backs

DEFENSE:

Nick Reveiz Defensive Coordinator

Malik Goodman Safeties

Ty Phillips Bandits

Mike Welch Defensive Line

SPECIAL TEAMS:

Kerry Webb Special Teams Coordinator

IN THE COACHES BOOTH:

Nick Back Offensive QC / TEs

Malik Chevy Cornerbacks

Corey Headley Wide Receivers

Ross Pryor Linebackers

Joe Kieser Special Teams QC

Braden Erwin Assistant GM

NOTABLE WCU FOOTBALL ALUM:

- **DEAN BIASUCCI**, PK – former NFL kicker, Indianapolis Colts (3rd all-time leading scorer, 783 pts from 1984-94) ... Pro Bowl in 1987 ... St. Louis Ram in 1995;
- **FRAN BROWN**, DB – Current head football coach at Syracuse, former first-team All-SoCon selection from 2003-06;
- **LOUIS COOPER**, LB – 11th round draft pick by Seattle in 1985 ... Seven-year career, mostly with Kansas City Chiefs;
- **KEION CROSSEN**, DB – 7th round draft pick by New England in 2018 ... Played with New England, helping the Patriots to Super Bowl LII ... Also played with the Texans, Giants, and Dolphins;
- **TIGER GREENE**, DB – Played seven seasons in Atlanta (1985) and Green Bay (1986-91)
- **BRAD HOOVER**, FB – Former fullback for the Carolina Panthers (2000-10) ... Played in Super Bowl XXXVII;
- **ANDREW JORDAN**, TE – Drafted in the 6th round of the 1994 draft ... Played eight seasons with the Minnesota Vikings, Philadelphia Eagles, and Tampa Bay Bucs;
- **TONY JONES**, OL – 2-time Super Bowl champion, 12-year NFL veteran with the Denver Broncos;
- **EDDIE MCGILL**, WR/TE – Two seasons, with St. Louis Cardinals;
- **DAVID PATTEN**, WR – Played for four NFL teams, most notably winning three Super Bowl rings with the New England Patriots;
- **GENO SEGERS** (FB) – former Catamount football player, now actor ... Dwayne in NBC's "Perfect Harmony," Chayton Littlestone in Cinemax original Banshee; Yellowstone;
- **CLYDE SIMMONS**, DL – 9th round NFL Draft pick by Philadelphia ... 15-year NFL veteran, 2x Pro Bowl, Eagles Hall of Fame ... Eagles, Cardinals, Jaguars, Bengals, & Bears;
- **STEVE WILLIAMS**, OL – Drafted by 49ers, played two seasons in 1973-74 for the Baltimore Colts;

OTHER NOTABLE CATAMOUNT STUDENT-ATHLETES:

- **JT POSTON** – Three-time PGA TOUR winner, WCU all-time leading scorer and 2-time SoCon men's golf champion (2011-15);
- **KEVIN MARTIN**, G – Played in the NBA from 2004-2016, playing for the Sacramento Kings, Houston Rockets, Oklahoma City Thunder, Minnesota Timberwolves;
- **GREG HOLLAND**, RHP – 10th round draft pick in 2007, played in the MLB 2010 through 2022 ... 2-time All-Star ... 2014 Mariano Rivera Award ... On the KC Royals 2015 World Championship team ... Pitched for six MLB teams;
- **JARED BURTON**, RHP – 8th round draft pick by Oakland A's in 2002, made MLB debut with Cincinnati Reds in 2007 ... MLB with Reds and Minnesota Twins;
- **MANTEO MITCHELL** – United States Olympic silver medalist from the 2012 men's 4x400-relay, who is currently pursuing a run at the Olympic bobsled team;
- **MATT STILLWELL** (BASE) – independent country music singer and recording artist, currently with "Hometown House Party."
- Among other WCU's graduates are former Navy & Georgia Tech football coach and SoCon Hall of Famer, **PAUL JOHN-SON**; former NFL referee and ESPN officiating analyst, **GERALD AUSTIN**; actress **BOBBI BAKER**, and CBS's *Big Brother* (BB) 13 winner & BB27 participant, **RACHEL REILLY**.

- **WE'RE GOING STREAKING:** WR **MICHAEL 'MJ' ROSSIN** entered the season having caught a touchdown pass in FOUR straight games to end the 2025 season – the streak was snapped against Eastern Kentucky ... He caught a TD pass at Chattanooga, a career-best two receiving scores against Mercer, and one receiving touchdown against both ETSU and at VMI ... Rossin caught touchdown passes in FIVE of WCU's final SIX games of 2025;

- **COACHING STAFF CHANGES:** **NICK REVEIZ** (*pronounced ruh-VASE*), who spent the past three seasons as the defensive coordinator at Charleston Southern, was named to the same position at Western Carolina in late February ... Reveiz is a 13-year collegiate coaching veteran with additional stops at VMI (2022), Albany State, and Carson-Newman;

- The Catamount defense has had **FOUR** different coordinators over the past FIVE seasons – Justin Hinds, 2021; Chaz Scales, 2022-23; Jerry Odom, 2024-25; and **NICK REVEIZ** in 2026;

- WCU held ECU to just 21 points, the **fewest allowed by a WCU defense in a season opener** since holding Mars Hill to 14 points back in 2015 -- and the fewest allowed to a NCAA Division I team in an opener since 2002, when the Catamounts held Liberty (then FCS) to just three points;

- WCU's defense held ECU to just seven points in the second half and limited the Colonels to 174 yards of total offense over the final two quarters;

- Reveiz is among FIVE new full-time assistant coaches on the Catamount staff entering 2026 – **DEFENSE: Malik Chevy** (cornerbacks), **Ty Phillips** (bandits), **Ross Pryor** (linebackers), and **Mike Welch** (defensive line / run-game coordinator) ... **OFFENSE: Parish Metzger** (quarterbacks), who assumed a full-time role ... WCU's offense moved **Corey Headley** (wide receivers) ... **Kerry Webb** (special teams) was elevated to Associate Head Coach;

- **HIT THE GAS WITH WCU'S RECORD-SETTING OFFENSE:** For a fifth-straight season, WCU eclipsed 5,000 yards of total offense – and a fourth-straight year it broke the program record, finishing the year with 5,920 total yards to edge the 2023 team (5,545) by 375 yards and 2024 squad (5,665) by 255 yards ... WCU's offensive average of 472.1 yards per game ranked THIRD in the NCAA FCS in 2024 and ranked SECOND in the NCAA FCS with a 493.3 yards per game average in 2025;

2021: 5,181 yds | 2022: 5,339 yds | 2023: 5,545 yds | 2024: 5,665 yds | 2025: 5,920 yds

- **PRESEASON ALL-AMERICA:** Western Carolina senior DB **KEN MOORE JR.** was a THREE-TIME FCS All-America selection entering 2026, including a first-team nod from FCS Football Central and second-team honors from Stats Perform and Phil Steele;

- Moore Jr. was a first-team All-SoCon selection in 2025, finishing sixth on the WCU squad with 43 tackles, including 28 solo stops and a career-best 5.5 tackles for loss, including a sack ... He had three interceptions, tied for the third-most in the SoCon, returning a pick 64 yards for a TD in the home win over Furman, earning **SoCon Defensive Player of the Week** honors ... Moore added seven seasonal pass breakups, tied for sixth in the conference;

- It's the fifth-straight season WCU has landed a player on the Stats Perform Preseason All-America team, joining QBs **Taron Dickens** (2025) and **Cole Gonzales** (2024), transfer linebacker **Antoine Williams** (2023), and **Calvin Jones** (2022) as a kick returner.

- **TRIO NAMED PRESEASON ALL-SOCON:** Three Catamounts landed on the 2026 Preseason All-Southern Conference teams released as part of the SoCon Football Media Day festivities at the Hotel Hartness on July 21 ... Preseason All-America selection **KEN MOORE JR.** was named a first-team All-SoCon selection at defensive back, with wide receiver **AJ COLOMBO**, who returns from an injury that sidelined him in 2025, and offensive lineman **ZACH WATSON** earning second-team plaudits;

- **FOUR-SPOT IN SOCON PRESEASON:** Finishing as the runner-up the past two seasons, Western Carolina was picked fourth in the official preseason coaches' poll. After being picked third each of the past two seasons, this year's prediction is the lowest preseason selection for the Catamounts since a fifth-place pick in both the 2022 and 2023 polls.

BELL VS. OPPONENTS AT WCU

OPPONENT	W-L	STREAK
Arkansas	0-1	L-1
CAMPBELL	1-1	W-1
Charleston Southern	2-0	W-2
CINCINNATI	FIRST MEETING	
CHATTANOOGA	4-1	W-4
EASTERN KENTUCKY	2-1	W-2
Elon	1-1	L-1
ETSU	2-3	L-2
FURMAN	3-2	W-2
Gardner-Webb	0-2	L-2
Georgia Tech	0-1	L-1
MERCER	0-5	L-5
Montana	0-1	L-1
NC State	0-1	L-1
Oklahoma	0-1	L-1
PRESBYTERIAN	1-0	W-1
SAMFORD	3-2	W-3
THE CITADEL	4-1	W-3
VMI	4-1	W-2
Wake Forest	0-1	L-1
WOFFORD	5-0	W-5
TOTALS	31-26	W-1

BELL RECORD – BY UNIFORM:

JERSEY / PANT COLOR	RECORD
White / White (16x)	10-6 (W-2)
White / Gold (9x)	5-4 (W-4)
White / Purple (8x)	3-5 (W-1)
Purple / White (7x)	4-4 (W-2)
Purple / Gold (9x)	4-5 (L-1)
Purple / Purple (7x)	5-2 (L-1)
Black / Black (1x)	1-0 (W-1)

BELL RECORD YEAR-BY-YEAR

JACKSONVILLE	OVERALL	PFL	FINISH
2007	3-8	2-5	t-6th
2008	9-4	7-1	1st
2009	7-4	6-2	t-3rd
2010	10-1	8-0	t-1st
2011	7-4	6-2	3rd
2012	7-4	5-3	t-4th
2013	5-6	4-4	6th
2014	9-2	7-1	t-1st
2015	9-2	6-2	t-3rd
TOTALS	66-35	52-19	
VALDOSTA STATE	OVERALL	GSC	FINISH
2016	8-3	6-2	t-2nd
2017	5-4	5-3	t-2nd
2018	14-0	8-0	1st
TOTALS	27-7	19-5	
WESTERN CAROLINA	OVERALL	SoCon	FINISH
2021	4-7	4-4	4th-t
2022	6-5	4-4	5th
2023	7-4	5-3	4th
2024	7-5	6-2	2nd
2025	7-5	6-2	2nd
2026	1-0	0-0	
TOTALS	32-26	25-15	
ALL-TIME	125-68		

► **MORE FOR MOORE – NAMED TO BUCK BUCHANAN WATCH LIST:** Ken Moore Jr. was included on the preseason watch list for the **2026 Buck Buchanan Award**, given annually by Stats Perform FCS to the nation's top defensive player ... He is one of 30 defensive players on this year's preseason watch list, which features five previous finalists, including last year's runner-up, Furman DL Joshua Stoneking, and the only other Southern Conference player ... Moore Jr. is the third Catamount to land on the Buck Buchanan Award Watch List, joining defensive back **Marvin Tillman** (2018) and linebacker **Antoine Williams** (2023).

► **YOU'LL ALWAYS REMEMBER YOUR FIRST** – Catamounts with first career TD on first career catch:

- WCU has TWO players on its 2026 roster who scored their FIRST career touchdown on their FIRST collegiate career reception – RB **JOSH PERRY** and WR **TREY WALKER**;
- RB **JOSH PERRY** caught his first career touchdown pass on a nine-yard strike from QB Taron Dickens in the second quarter of WCU's home win over Furman in 2025;
- WR **TREY WALKER** caught a 25-yard TD pass from QB Bennett Judy late in the 2nd quarter against Gardner-Webb in 2025 ... It was Walker's first reception, first TD catch, and just the second TD pass for Judy on the exchange.

► **WESTERN CAROLINA FOOTBALL IN SEASON OPENERS:**

Western Carolina improved to 19-32 in season openers since joining the SoCon in 1976 – though 26 of those 51 games were against NCAA I-A or now FBS competition ... WCU has only won FOUR of its last 13 season-openers – most coming against South Atlantic Conference members in Mars Hill (2012, 2015) and Newberry (2018) before this year's season-opening win over Eastern Kentucky ... Five of the seven losses have come to NCAA FBS competition;

- Since 1977, WCU has opened a season at HOME just 17 times, posting a 13-4 record – all four losses were to NCAA FCS opponents with just two of the 13 wins coming in the same division (VMI, 1980; ECU, 2026).

RECAPING WESTERN CAROLINA'S 2025 SEASON:

- For a third consecutive season, Western Carolina football watched with hope as the NCAA FCS Football Selection Committee unveiled the playoff Field of 24 on Selection Sunday in 2025. The Catamounts had hopes that winning seven of its last nine games after returning its starting quarterback and a second-straight second-place finish in a balanced but cannibalizing Southern Conference would lead to the end of a 42 year hiatus of postseason play. However, like in 2023 and 2024, WCU was left on the outside of the playoff field after the three early-season defeats and a consecutive late-season league losses extended Western Carolina's postseason drought;
- Western Carolina won seven games in 2025 giving the Catamounts three-consecutive seven-win seasons ... WCU posted a final record above .500 for the fourth-straight season ... It was **WCU's sixth seven-win season over the past 12 years** – and third in three seasons (2014, 2015, 2017, 2023, 2024, 2025);
- WCU finished in sole possession of second place in the SoCon – one of the nation's Top Five toughest NCAA FCS league – in consecutive seasons in 2024 and 2025 ... the Catamounts scored **a program-best six league victories** at 6-2 in SoCon play in 2024 and 2025 ... the squad's second-place finish was the best for WCU since 1986 when the Catamounts also finished second ... It was WCU's FIFTH runner-up finish since joining the league in 1976;
- WCU was among the national rankings OR received votes in NINE of the 13 weeks of 2025, carrying a number by its name for four games – twice in the Stats Perform FCS Top 25 and four times in the AFCA Coaches poll ... WCU ranked as high as No. 18 last year;
- In 2025, the Catamounts eclipsed the 3,000 passing yards mark for just the SIXTH time in program history – and for the **FIFTH consecutive season**, throwing for a **program single-season record 4,268 yards** – WCU's second-consecutive 4K passing total and the most in the NCAA FCS in 2025 ... WCU **LED THE NCAA FCS with 355.7 passing yards per game**, finishing as the NCAA Champion in 2025, its second-straight season ... the Catamounts tossed a program record 48 TD passes, a fifth-straight season with 24-or-more aerial scores;
- WCU eclipsed the 300 point plateau as a team for a FIFTH-straight season, finishing with a program-record 463 points ... the Catamounts averaged a SoCon-leading 38.6 points per game, SEVENTH in the NCAA FCS;
- **WESTERN CAROLINA'S 2026 SCHEDULE:** Opening with a Week Zero game at home against ECU, WCU's 2026 schedule features 12 games for a third-consecutive season, equally split between E.J. Whitmire Stadium / Bob Waters Field and six road contests that include four in Southern Conference play ... the Catamounts playing eight-straight league games from the end of September through November, interrupted once by the Oct. 17 bye week.
 - Combined, WCU faces a pair of NCAA FCS playoff teams from a season ago and a pair of double-digit win teams, as seven of the 12 opponents finished .500 or better in 2025;
 - Western Carolina's six road games this fall will span SIX different states – North Carolina (at Campbell), Ohio (at Cincinnati), Tennessee (at ETSU), Georgia (at Mercer), South Carolina (at Furman), and Alabama (at Samford) ... Last year, the Catamounts did not leave the Old North State until Week Six at Wofford, and visited just three states – South Carolina (at Wofford; at The Citadel), Tennessee (at Chattanooga), and Virginia (at VMI).;
 - With the unbalanced league in 2026, WCU faces all but ONE team in SoCon play, missing its annual scheduled date against VMI ... this year's absence halts a streak of 12 straight seasons of playing, with WCU leading in that stretch 10-2 – but it's not the first break in the series as the Keydets and Catamounts did not play from 2003 through 2013 when the Keydets left the SoCon for the Big South Conference;
 - The Catamounts kick off the season against Eastern Kentucky on Aug. 29, unveiling the football facility improvements that include the Western Skybox, new lights, and new turf, among others. WCU won the most recent series meeting by three, 27-24, in Richmond, Ky., in 2023, and seeks its first home victory over the Colonels since 2006.
 - WCU looks to halt a 43 year drought of advancing to the NCAA postseason, trying to return to the NCAA DI FCS playoffs for the first time since making a run to the national title game in 1983 – the **FIRST** SoCon team to play for the title. The SoCon regular season champion garners the league's automatic bid into the postseason field.

'PLAY FAST, SCORE FASTER' – MORE NOTES ON WESTERN CAROLINA'S OFFENSE:

- Under **KERWIN BELL**, the Catamounts have scored 30-or-more points in **37 of the 58 (63.8%)** games and have recorded 40-or-more points a combined 22 times ... Over the past SIX seasons, WCU has amassed 2,025 total points in 58 games (356 in 11 games in 2021; 351 in 11 games in 2022; 413 in 11 games in 2023; 397 in 12 games in 2024; 463 in 12 games in 2025; 45 in 1 game in 2026), averaging **34.9 points per game under Bell**;
- The Catamount offense has amassed 5,000+ yards in each of the five seasons under **KERWIN BELL**, eclipsing the school record each of the past three seasons, including **a program-best 5,920 total yards in 2025** (5,181 in 2021; 5,339 in 2022; 5,545 in 2023; 5,665 in 2024) ... WCU has averaged 5,529.8 yards of total offense each season under the Bell offense – **and an average of 485.5 yards per game over the 58 total games**;
- WCU has recorded 500 or more yards of total offense a combined **30 times** under the Bell offense – averaging 5.8 games per season ... WCU has **NINE** games over 600 yards of offense and 700+ yards **THREE** times, including a school-record 801 yards at Furman (2024), 766 against Presbyterian in 2022, and a high of 733 in 2025:

YEAR	OPPONENT	RESULT	TOTAL OFF.	RUSHING	PASSING
2026	vs. Eastern Kentucky	W, 45-21	508 yds	188 yds	320 yds
2025	vs. Samford	W, 50-35	733 yds	151 yds	582 yds
	vs. #10/12 Mercer	L, 49-47	599 yds	48 yds	551 yds
	at Campbell	W, 42-35	564 yds	76 yds	488 yds
	vs. ETSU	L, 52-35	529 yds	103 yds	426 yds
	vs. Furman	W, 52-7	522 yds	302 yds	220 yds
	at VMI	W, 48-6	519 yds	173 yds	346 yds
	at The Citadel	W, 45-38	515 yds	146 yds	369 yds
2024	at Furman	W, 52-20	801 yds	149 yds	652 yds
	at #17/14 Mercer	L, 44-34	582 yds	187 yds	395 yds
	vs. #25/18 Chattanooga	W, 38-34	548 yds	117 yds	431 yds
	vs. VMI	W, 58-28	534 yds	216 yds	318 yds
2023	vs. ETSU	W, 58-7	687 yds	174 yds	513 yds
	Charleston Southern	W, 77-21	683 yds	237 yds	446 yds
	at The Citadel	W, 49-14	569 yds	261 yds	308 yds
	at Eastern Kentucky	W, 27-24	551 yds	211 yds	340 yds
	at #20/24 Chattanooga	W, 52-50	551 yds	275 yds	276 yds
	vs. #7/8 Samford	W, 30-7	546 yds	284 yds	262 yds
2022	vs. Presbyterian	W, 77-21	766 yds	384 yds	382 yds
	at Furman	L, 47-40	691 yds	229 yds	462 yds
	at Charleston Southern	W, 52-38	616 yds	183 yds	433 yds
	vs. VMI	W, 38-17	521 yds	161 yds	360 yds
	vs. Wofford	W, 36-29	515 yds	247 yds	268 yds
2021	at Garner-Webb	L, 52-34	650 yds	223 yds	427 yds
	at VMI	W, 52-24	616 yds	217 yds	399 yds
	at The Citadel	W, 45-31	577 yds	176 yds	401 yds
	vs. ETSU	L, 56-35	544 yds	134 yds	410 yds
	vs. Furman	W, 43-42	538 yds	152 yds	386 yds
	vs. Samford	L, 42-37	503 yds	182 yds	321 yds
	vs. Eastern Kentucky	L, 31-28	501 yds	226 yds	275 yds



2026 SOUTHERN CONFERENCE FOOTBALL



»»» 2026 SoCon FINAL STANDINGS «««

SoCon Team	SoCon	Overall
Wofford	1-0 1.000	1-0 1.000
Chattanooga	0-0 .000	1-0 1.000
Furman	0-0 .000	1-0 1.000
Mercer	0-0 .000	1-0 1.000
Tennessee Tech	0-0 .000	1-0 1.000
Western Carolina	0-0 .000	1-0 1.000
ETSU	0-0 .000	0-1 .000
Samford	0-0 .000	0-1 .000
VMI	0-0 .000	0-1 .000
The Citadel	0-1 .000	0-1 .000

»»» 2026 SoCon RANKINGS – Week One «««

SoCon Team	AFCA Coaches	STATS
Tennessee Tech	#13	#12
Mercer	#15	#19
WESTERN CAROLINA	RV (#26)	#24
Chattanooga	RV (#39)	RV (#41)
ETSU	RV (#51)	N/A
Furman	RV (#35)	N/A
Wofford	RV (#29)	N/A
Samford	N/A	N/A
The Citadel	N/A	N/A
VMI	N/A	N/A

»»» SoCon WEEKEND SCHEDULE: «««

SEPTEMBER 5 (SATURDAY)

Gardner-Webb at Wofford	1:30 pm	Spartanburg, S.C.
Western Carolina at Campbell	3:30 pm	Buies Creek, N.C.
The Citadel at Charlotte	3:30 pm	Charlotte, N.C.
Furman at Tennessee	3:30 pm	Knoxville, Tenn.
Tusculum at ETSU	5:30 pm	Johnson City, Tenn.
Tennessee Tech at Chattanooga *	6 pm	Chattanooga, Tenn.
Presbyterian at Mercer	6 pm	Macon, Ga.
VMI at Virginia Tech	7:30 pm	Blacksburg, Va.

BOLD = Home Team | * Southern Conference game

WESTERN CAROLINA'S OVERTIME RECORD SINCE 1977 (DIV. I)

YEAR	RESULT	OT	OPPONENT (DATE)
1991	L, 27-24	2OT	at Marshall (11/2)
1998	W, 331-24	2OT	ETSU (9/26)
1999	L, 35-32	OT	Samford (11/5)
2004	L, 26-20	OT	at Gardner-Webb (9/25)
2006	L, 17-14	OT	Chattanooga (11/14)
2006	L, 30-27	OT	at The Citadel (11/21)
2008	L, 38-31	OT	Georgia Southern (11/25)
2013	W, 27-24	OT	Elon (10/26)
2017	L, 35-38	OT	at #5 Wofford (10/7)
2018	L, 45-43	3OT	at ETSU (10/27)
2019	W, 23-20	OT	ETSU (11/9)
11 GAMES – 3-8 OVERALL (3-3 Home, 0-5 Road)			

2026 CATAMOUNT FOOTBALL – SEASON GAME-BY-GAME PREVIEW IN BRIEF

GAME 1		EASTERN KENTUCKY Saturday, Aug. 29 CULLOWHEE W, 45-21	CULLOWHEE – Lex Thomas threw for 320 yards and three touchdowns, including a pair to Josh Perry, and added a fourth-quarter rushing score as Western Carolina rallied for a 45-21 season-opening victory over Eastern Kentucky at E.J. Whitmire Stadium / Bob Waters Field. WCU overcame a 14-10 halftime deficit, outscoring the Colonels 35-7 in the second half to earn its first season opening win since 2022. A crowd of 13,482, the 10th largest in Whitmire Stadium history, was on hand to witness the debut of the stadium's latest facility enhancements.
GAME 2		at Campbell Saturday, Sept. 5 Buies Creek, N.C. 3:30 pm	A year removed from its first trip to Buies Creek and first series victory, Western Carolina makes a return trip to eastern North Carolina looking for back-to-back victories against Campbell with a Labor Day weekend match-up. Last year's 42-35 win at Barker-Lane Stadium avenged WCU's home loss to the Camels in 2024 as Campbell claimed its first victory over a nationally-ranked opponent in the 24-16 upset of The Cats in Cullowhee. Campbell revived football in 2008 after originally playing from 1925-50 as a junior college, facing WCU in 1937 and 1939.
GAME 3		at Cincinnati Saturday, Sept. 12 Cincinnati, Ohio 7 pm	Western Carolina and Cincinnati meet for just the second time in program history, 21 years after the Catamounts nearly pulled off their first upset victory over an NCAA FBS team. WCU dropped a tight, 7-3, decision at Nippert Stadium in 2005, upended by a pair of interceptions and a holding penalty on a would-be go-ahead TD run by Lamont Reid midway through the fourth quarter. Cincinnati is now in the Big 12 Conference. WCU has faced just one other Big 12 team, falling at Kansas back in 1993. Former Catamount WR Isaiah Johnson plays for the Bearcats.
GAME 4		PRESBYTERIAN Saturday, Sept. 19 CULLOWHEE 2:30 pm	The Catamounts look to 'White Out Whitmire' as the University celebrates its Family Weekend, welcoming the Presbyterian Blue Hose to Cullowhee. WCU holds an all-time 11-9 series lead over PC, and the Catamounts have won 10 of the last 11 head-to-head series meetings dating back to 1970, including all five meetings in Cullowhee. Western Carolina matched a program-record with 77 points scored coming on a Whitmire Stadium record of 766 yards of total offense in a 'White Out' game in 2022. WCU QB coach Parish Metzger tossed his first career TD pass in the win.
GAME 5		at ETSU * Saturday, Sept. 26 Johnson City, Tenn. 3:30 pm	The mountain-rivalry shifts to Johnson City when Western Carolina and ETSU close September in the "Blue Ridge Border Battle." The Bucs maintained possession of the traveling trophy, "the Rock," with last year's 52-35 win in Cullowhee, a week after WCU fell to Mercer in a first-place showdown. The all-time record in the highly-competitive head-to-head series stands tied at 27 wins, 27 losses apiece, with one tie. Five of the last eight series meetings have been decided in one-possession games, including a pair in overtime. WCU has won three-straight SoCon openers.
GAME 6		TENNESSEE TECH * Saturday, Oct. 3 CULLOWHEE 6 pm	October opens with Western Carolina hosting its football alumni weekend – and welcoming new chromatic conference counterpart, Tennessee Tech, in Cullowhee. The SoCon's newest member and the two-time defending OVC–Big South Association champion Golden Eagles visit as the two Purple & Gold squads rekindle a series that has lain dormant since 2000. TTU holds a slim, 7-6-1, edge in the all-time series with this year's meeting marking the eighth in Cullowhee with the home series tied, 3-3-1. Tech has won the last two meetings in 1998 and 2000.
GAME 7		at Mercer * Saturday, Oct. 10 Macon, Ga. 3 pm	The Catamounts look to put the clamps on a 10 game series losing skid when it visits two-time defending SoCon champion, Mercer. After winning the first two meetings in 2014 and 2015, WCU hasn't been able to solve the Bears, trailing 2-10 in the series. Last year in Cullowhee, QB Taron Dickens tied the SoCon single-game record with seven TD passes as the Catamounts rallied from a trio of double-digit second half deficits. However, No. 10/12 Mercer pulled in front in the final 90 seconds and WCU missed a last second FG before the third-largest Cullowhee crowd of 14,513.
GAME 8		CHATTANOOGA * Saturday, Oct. 24 CULLOWHEE 2:30 pm	Coming off the bye week (Oct. 17) for a second-straight season, the Catamounts host Chattanooga on Homecoming 2026. The last four series meetings – each WCU victories – have been decided by an average of four points and 16 total points. In 2022, WCU scored the game-winning TD in the final minute, 32-29. Richard McCollum nailed a walk-off 32-yard FG to cap an instant classic between two ranked teams in WCU's 52-50 win in 2023. Ken Moore in 2024 and Cam'Ron Dabney in 2025 intercepted red-zone passes to preserve wins. WCU is 16-6 after the bye under Kerwin Bell.
GAME 9		at Furman * Saturday, Oct. 31 Greenville, S.C. 2 pm	Western Carolina travels to Greenville, S.C., to face chromatic rival Furman in a Halloween edition of the "Battle for Purple Supremacy" in the Southern Conference. WCU has outscored the Paladins, 104-27 in the last two meetings, scoring 52 points in back-to-back seasons. Cole Gonzales threw for 620 yards as part of 801 yards of total offense in the 52-20 win in 2024. WCU rushed for 302 yards in last year's 52-7 win in Cullowhee. Though WCU has two-straight wins, Furman has won seven of the last nine series meetings. WCU trails in the series, 15-36-2.
GAME 10		WOFFORD * Saturday, Nov. 7 CULLOWHEE 1 pm	November opens with the Wofford Terriers making the short trip up the mountain to face WCU on Heroes and EBCI Day in Cullowhee. The Catamounts have won five-straight in the head-to-head series with Wofford, though the last four meetings have been decided in one-possession games and a combined 16 total points. It's WCU's longest series win streak between the two since Wofford joined the SoCon in 1997. WCU trails in the all-time series, 19-28, with the series standing 12-12 in Cullowhee. WCU downed Wofford, 21-17, without fans post Hurricane Helene in 2024.
GAME 11		at Samford * Saturday, Nov. 14 Birmingham, Ala. 3:30 pm ET / 2:30 pm CT	Western Carolina wraps up the road portion of its regular season with a trip to Birmingham to face Samford in mid-November. The Catamounts are riding their longest series win streak over the Bulldogs with three-straight victories, including an exciting 47-42 road win in 2024 in Birmingham, just the second for WCU and its first since 1969 that halted a 10 game road losing skid against the 'Dogs. Western Carolina has averaged 42.3 points on 538.7 offensive yards per game during its three-game series winning streak, amassing 733 yards (582 pass, 151 rush) last year.
GAME 12		THE CITADEL * Saturday, Nov. 21 CULLOWHEE 1 pm	The Catamounts close the regular-season on Hall of Fame and Senior Day in Cullowhee in the 51st series meeting and 26th overall in Cullowhee. WCU has won five of the last six head-to-head meetings, including three-straight victories – it's longest series win streak since 2001-03. During its three-game win streak, Western Carolina has averaged 493.3 total yards of offense, including 323.7 yards passing, while The Citadel has averaged 225 rushing yards per game against the Catamounts. Desmond Reid rushed for 5 TDs in 2023 and Jalynn Williams ran for three in 2024.

CAMPBELL

WCU trails 1-3-0 (W-1)

At WCU: WCU trails, 0-1

At CAMP: WCU trails, 0-2

Year	Site	Result	Score
1937	A	L	0 20
1939	A	L	6 7
2024	H	L	16 24
2025	A	W	42 35
2026			

CHATTANOOGA

WCU trails 21-30-0 (W-4)

At WCU: WCU trails 12-14-0

At UTC: WCU trails 9-16-0

Year	Site	Result	Score
1973	H	W	14 0
1975	A	L	6 27
1976	H	L	14 28
1977	H	L	10 21
1978	A	W	38 21
1979	H	L	35 42
1980	A	L	14 39
1981	H	W	24 10
1982	A	W	20 0
1983	H	W	25 15
1984	A	L	6 10
1985	H	L	3 23
1986	A	L	7 34
1987	H	L	11 13
1988	A	L	14 19
1989	H	W	26 20
1990	A	L	21 23
1991	H	W	38 35
1992	A	W	44 13
1993	A	W	41 10
1994	H	W	53 15
1995	A	L	14 35
1996	H	L	6 20
1997	A	L	21 24
1998	H	W	24 21
1999	A	L	28 56
2000	H	W	41 36
2001	A	W	21 3
2002	H	W	45 28
2003	A	L	0 38
2004	H	L	24 27
2005	A	W	38 20
2006	H	L-OT	14 17
2007	A	L	21 39
2008	H	W	27 7
2009	A	L	20 24
2010	H	L	21 27
2011	A	L	7 51
2012	H	L	24 45
2013	A	L	21 42
2014	H	L	0 51
2015	A	L	13 41
2016	H	L	25 38
2017	A	W	45 7
2018	H	L	6 26
2019	A	L	36 60
2021	A	L	17 45
2022	H	W	32 29
2023	A	W	52 50
2024	H	W	38 34
2025	A	W	35 28
2026			

CINCINNATI

WCU trails 0-1-0 (L-1)

At WCU: n/a

At Cincy: WCU trails, 0-1

Year	Site	Result	Score
2005	A	L	3 7
2026			

THE CITADEL

WCU trails 22-27-1 (W-3)

At WCU: WCU trails 12-13-0

At The Citadel: WCU trails 10-14-0

At Columbia: Series tied 0-0-1

Year	Site	Result	Score
1972	A	W	10 0
1977	A	L	0 20
1978	H	W	38 24
1979	A	L	19 21
1980	H	L	21 28
1981	A	L	3 12
1982	H	L	20 24
1983	A	W	44 17
1984	H	L	33 34
1985	A	L	3 10
1986	H	W	27 12
1987	A	L	24 38
1988	H	L	21 27
1989	N	T	22 22
1990	H	L	10 28
1991	A	L	13 38
1992	H	L	31 36
1993	H	W	38 18
1994	A	W	42 38
1995	H	W	31 14
1996	A	L	25 39
1997	H	W	45 25
1998	A	W	14 8
1999	H	W	24 17
2000	A	L	10 17
2001	H	W	28 25
2002	A	W	37 34
2003	H	W	28 21
2004	A	L	0 17
2005	H	L	7 17
2006	A	L-OT	27 30
2007	H	L	31 37
2008	A	L	14 34
2009	H	W	14 10
2010	A	W	24 13
2011	H	L	7 35
2012	A	L	31 45
2013	H	L	21 28
2014	H	W	29 15
2015	A	L	10 28
2016	H	L	14 37
2017	A	W	31 19
2018	H	L	24 38
2019	A	L	17 35
2021	A	W	45 31
2022	H	L	34 21
2023	A	W	49 14
2024	H	W	30 16
2025	A	W	45 38
2026			

N - played in Columbia, S.C.

EKU

WCU trails 4-5-0 (W-2)

At WCU: Series tied, 2-2

At ECU: WCU trails, 2-3

Year	Site	Result	Score
1988	H	L	14 32
1989	A	L	13 31
2006	H	W	20 17
2007	A	L	21 45
2009	A	W	24 7
2020	A	L	17 49
2021	H	L	28 31
2023	A	W	27 24
2026	H	W	45 21

ETSU

Series TIED 27-27-1 (L-2)

At WCU: WCU leads 14-12

At ETSU: WCU trails 12-14-1

Neutral: Series tied 1-1-0

Year	Site	Result	Score
1932	H	L	0 26
1933	A	L	0 26
1934	H	L	2 6
1935	A	L	0 13
1936	A	L	0 2

1937	A	L	0 12
1948	H	W	32 12
1949	A	W	14 0
1950	N	W	13 7
1951	A	W	7 6
1952	H	L	7 13
1953	A	L	7 34
1954	H	L	21 24
1955	A	T	7 7
1956	H	L	6 7
1957	A	L	6 7
1975	H	L	8 29
1976	A	W	14 0
1977	H	W	35 0
1978	A	L	14 21
1979	H	W	20 17
1980	A	W	20 17
1981	H	L	23 32
1982	A	W	27 25
1983	H	W	17 16
1984	A	W	31 17
1985	H	W	13 3
1986	H	W	43 16
1987	A	W	37 20
1988	H	W	33 23
1989	A	L	11 30
1990	H	W	21 17
1991	A	W	29 15
1992	H	W	41 12
1993	A	W	24 24
1994	H	L	31 34
1995	A	L	10 36
1996	H	L	10 49
1997	A	L	18 28
1998	H	W-2OT	31 24
1999	A	L	10 38
2000	H	W	39 27
2001	A	W	20 6
2002	H	L	7 27
2003	A	W	39 16
2016	A	L	31 34
2017	H	W	49 10
2018	A	L-3OT	43 45
2019	H	W-OT	23 20
2021	A	L	17 24
2021	H	L	35 56
2022	A	W	20 17
2023	H	W	58 7
2024	A	L	21 24
2025	H	L	35 52
2026			

N - game played in Waynesville, N.C.
* - played at the Bristol Motor Speedway**FURMAN**

WCU trails: 15-36-2 (W-2)

At WCU: WCU trails 8-17-1

At FUR: WCU trails 7-19-1

Year	Site	Result	Score
1971	A	L	14 21
1972	H	W	24 15
1975	A	L	0 35
1977	A	T	24 24
1978	H	L	7 24
1979	A	L	14 23
1980	H	L	14 28
1981	H	L	27 31
1982	A	L	6 12
1983	H	T	17 17
1983	A	W	14 7
1984	A	W	20 19
1985	H	L	27 31
1986	A	W	19 13
1987	H	W	20 14
1988	A	L	0 31
1989	H	L	3 17
1990	A	L	9 42
1991	H	L	14 42
1992	A	W	29 27
1993	H	W	23 20
1994	A	W	35 24
1995	H	L	21 31
1996	A	L	30 45
1997	H	W	17 16
1998	A	L	7 31
1999	H	L	19 27
2000	A	L	14 38
2001	H	L	13 31
2002	A	L	23 24
2003	H	L	13 19
2004	A	L	10 31
2005	H	W	41 21

2006	A	L	7 42
2007	H	L	21 52
2008	A	L	21 28
2009	H	L	14 33
2010	A	L	17 31
2011	H	L	21 47
2012	A	L	24 45
2013	H	L	20 32
2014	A	W	35 17
2015	H	W	48 10
2016	A	L	21 49
2017	H	L	6 28
2018	A	L	38 44
2019	H	L	7 28
2021	A	L	7 35
2021	H	W	43 42
2022	A	L	40 47
2023	H	L	17 29
2024	A	W	52 20
2025	H	W	52 7
2026			

MERCER

WCU trails 2-10-0 (L-10)

At WCU: WCU trails 1-5-0

At MER: WCU trails 1-5-0

Year	Site	Result	Score
2014	A	W	35 21
2015	H	W	24 21
2016	A	L	24 38
2017	H	L	33 35
2018	A	L	46 59
2019	H	L	27 49
2021	A	L	28 45
2021	H	L	24 34
2022	A	L	6 49
2023	H	L	38 45
2024	A	L	34 44
2025	H	L	47 49
2026			

PRESBYTERIAN

WCU leads 11-9-0 (W-2)

At WCU: WCU leads 6-5-0

At PC: WCU leads 5-4-0

Year	Site	Result	Score
1950	H	L	6 20
1951	A	L	0 12
1952	H	L	6 44
1953	A	L	0 20
1965	H	W	8 7
1966	A	L	29 42
1967	H	L	0 10
1968	H	L	19 20
1969	H	L	17 28
1970	A	W	28 21
1972	A	W	24 14
1973	H	W	31 12
1974	A	W	28 10
1975	H	W	28 14
1976	A	W	19 7
2007	H	W	33 20
2008	A	W	23 21
2014	A	L	19 14
2015	H	W	33 21
2022	H	W	77 21
2026			

SAMFORD

WCU trails 6-17-0 (W-3)

At WCU: WCU trails 4-7-0

At SAM: WCU trails 2-10-0

Year	Site	Result	Score
1969	A	W	47 13
1991	H	L	3 16
1992	A	L	6 30
1997	A	L	0 19
1999	H	L-OT	32 35
2008	H	L	6 21
2009	A	L	3 16
2010	H	L	7 38
2011	A	L	24 52
2012	H	L	21 25
2013	A	L	23 62
2014	A	L	20 34
2015	H	W	56 36

2016	A	L	17 30
2017	H	W	38 34
2018	A	L	28 66
2019	H	L	13 31
2021	A	L	27 55
2021	H	L	37 42
2022	A	L	12 35
2023	H	W	30 7
2024	A	W	47 42
2025	H	W	50 35
2026			

TENNESSEE TECH

WCU trails 6-7-1 (L-2)

At WCU: Tied 3-3-1

At TTU: WCU trails 3-4-0

Year	Site	Result	Score
1971	A	L	17 27
1972	H	W	31 13
1973	H	T	10 10
1974	A	W	9 7
1977	A	L	21 41</

HEAD COACH KERWIN BELL (6TH SEASON)



PERSONAL INFORMATION:

BORN:	June 15, 1965
HOMETOWN:	Mayo, Fla.
ALMA MATER:	Florida, 1987
FAMILY:	Bell and his wife Cosette Odom, have three children; Kade (<i>OC @Pitt</i>), Kolton, and Kenzley; and a grand children, Palmer and Beckett

PLAYING EXPERIENCE:

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA, former walk-on, three-year starter at QB (1984-88); SEC Player of the Year (1984); First-Team All-SEC (1985) and Honorable mention All-America (1985, 1986)

- ▶ Florida-Georgia Hall of Fame, 1996 inductee
- ▶ Univ. of Florida Athletic Hall of Fame, 1997 inductee

MIAMI DOLPHINS (NFL), 7th-round draft pick (180), 1988

ATLANTA FALCONS (NFL), 1988

TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS (NFL), 1989

ORLANDO THUNDER (WLAFL), 1991-92

SACRAMENTO GOLD MINERS (CFL), 1993-94

EDMONTON ESKIMOS (CFL), 1995

INDIANAPOLIS COLTS (NFL), 1996-97

TORONTO ARGONAUTS (CFL), 1998

- ▶ CFL East All-Star (1998)

WINNIPEG BLUE BOMBERS (CFL), 1999-2000

TORONTO ARGONAUTS (CFL), 2000-01

COACHING EXPERIENCE:

UNIV. OF FLORIDA, graduate assistant (1990)

TORONTO ARGONAUTS, offensive coordinator (2000-01)

TRINITY CATHOLIC HIGH, head coach (2002-06)

JACKSONVILLE UNIV., head coach (2007-15)

- ▶ Pioneer Football League Coach of the Year (2008)

VALDOSTA STATE UNIV., head coach (2016-18)

- ▶ Gulf South Conference Co-Coach of the Year (2018)
- ▶ Don Hansen NCAA Division II Co-Coach of the Year (2018)
- ▶ NCAA Division II National Champion (2018)

UNIV. OF SOUTH FLORIDA, offensive coordinator (2019)

WESTERN CAROLINA UNIV., head coach (2021-)

An accomplished player who worked his way from walk-on to All-American to the National Football League, and a 12-year veteran head coach who won a combined four conference championships and the 2018 NCAA Division II National Championship, **KERWIN BELL** was named the 14th head football coach at Western Carolina University on April 27, 2021.

Bell came to Cullowhee having served as the offensive coordinator at the University of South Florida under head coach Charlie Strong in 2019. He had most recently walked off the field as a head coach following the 2018 NCAA Division II national championship, leading the Valdosta State Blazers where he coached for three seasons, twice making playoff appearances.

- ▶ Bell enters with **125 career victories**, eclipsing the century mark with the 38-17 home win over VMI in Cullowhee on Oct. 2, 2022;
- ▶ Western Carolina posted a second-straight seven win season in 2024 – matching the most for the program since 2017, that included a school-record SIX Southern Conference wins ... His squad finished with five SoCon wins in 2023, matching the most since that same 2017 campaign;
- ▶ Bell scored his first victory as Catamount head coach on Oct. 23, 2021 – a 45-31 victory at The Citadel that halted a six-game seasonal slide;
- ▶ Over a 12-year head coaching career prior to Cullowhee, Bell led the football programs at Valdosta State (2016-18) and Jacksonville University (2007-15). He did this coming on the heels of a 13-year playing career in professional football that included several stops in the NFL and the Canadian Football League;
- ▶ Bell served three seasons as the head coach at Valdosta State where he also guided the offense. He led the Blazers to a 27-7 record during his tenure including a school-record 15 straight victories, two Division II playoff appearances, and won both a conference and a national championship in 2018. He was **named the 2018 Don Hansen NCAA Division II Co-Coach of the Year** and the **Gulf South Conference Co-Coach of the Year** after leading VSU to a 14-0 record – the first unbeaten season in program history that included a thrilling 49-47 victory over Ferris State in the D-II National Championship game. Picked fifth in their conference in the preseason and the No. 3 seed entering the playoffs, the Blazers finished No. 1 nationally in the final AFCA Division II poll;
- ▶ Bell's 2018 offense led the nation in scoring (52.0 ppg), ranked second in first downs (341), and was fourth in total offense (523.9 ypg), red-zone offense (.901), and pass efficiency (167.37). The Blazers scored 728 points on the year, the most in NCAA Division II history, as they posted 7,334 yards (3,676 rushing/3,658 passing) and 7.9 yards per play on the year;
- ▶ Within Bell's system at Valdosta State, QB Rogan Wells finished as the runner-up for the Harlon Hill Trophy, presented to the Division II Player of the Year, and was named both the Region Two and Gulf South Conference Offensive Player of the Year. Wells accounted for 50 touchdowns on the year (including one receiving), led the nation in points responsible for (300), was second in passing touchdowns (38) and points responsible for per game (21.4 ppg), 10th in passing yards (3,075), 12th in passing efficiency (160.6) and 25th in total offense (271.9 ypg). He finished second on the team with 732 yards rushing and led the team with 11 rushing touchdowns;
- ▶ Bell led Valdosta State to runner-up conference finishes in his first two years guiding the program and went 8-3 with a playoff appearance in his first season at the helm in 2016 as the Blazers led the nation with 27 interceptions on defense;
- ▶ Prior to Valdosta, Bell led Jacksonville University for nine seasons, guiding the NCAA Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) program to a 66-35 record and **three Pioneer Football League (PFL) championships**. Serving as offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach as well as head coach, Bell was named the **2008 PFL Coach of the Year** and was a **finalist for the Eddie Robinson Award** after leading the Dolphins to a 9-4 seasonal record and conference title;
- ▶ He also led Jacksonville to a school-best 10-1 record and conference championship in 2010 as the Dolphins led the nation in total (486 ypg) and scoring (42.2 ppg) offense. JU also posted a 9-2 overall mark and won a conference title in 2014.
- ▶ Originally from Mayo, Fla., Bell was a quarterback at the University of Florida from 1983-87 where he completed over 57 percent of his 953 pass attempts for 7,585 yards and 56 touchdowns. A former walk-on, Bell concluded his collegiate career as the SEC Player of the Year in 1984 after leading Florida to a 9-1-1 record and a conference championship, and both a first-team All-SEC selection and All-America honorable mention in 1985, a season that saw the Gators earn the programs first-ever No. 1 national ranking in the Associated Press poll. Garnering a second honorable mention All-America honor in 1986, Bell was a 1987 team captain and earned the program's Fergie Ferguson Award.
- ▶ Bell was ranked the No. 26 Greatest Gator of all-time from the first 100 years of football at Florida in 2006 by The Gainesville Sun. Bell later served as a graduate assistant for the 1990 season under Steve Spurrier at Florida after earning a degree in psychology in 1987.
- ▶ Bell was selected in the seventh round (pick No. 180) of the 1988 NFL Draft by the Miami Dolphins, beginning his 13-year professional career that saw stops with NFL teams in Miami, Atlanta, Tampa Bay, and Indianapolis as well as stops in the Canadian Football League ... Passed for 19,538 yards and 101 touchdowns in nine seasons in the CFL ... Also played in the World League of American Football (WLAFL).

RECORD AT JACKSONVILLE
66-35

RECORD AT VALDOSTA STATE
27-7

RECORD AT WESTERN CAROLINA
32-26

WESTERN CAROLINA CATAMOUNTS – 2026 NUMERICAL ROSTER

NO.	NAME	POS.	HT.	WT.	YR.	HOMETOWN (PREVIOUS COLLEGE / HIGH SCHOOL)
0	AJ Colombo	WR	5-8	170	5th	Waxhaw, N.C. (Cuthbertson HS)
0	Blue Monroe	LB	6-1	225	5th	Concord, N.C. (Jay M. Robinson HS)
1	Jai Boyd	WR	6-2	180	Sr.	Ridgeway, S.C. (Fairfield Central HS)
1	Ken Moore Jr.	SPUR	5-10	165	5th	Miami, Fla. (Christopher Columbus HS)
2	Lex Thomas	QB	5-11	205	Jr.	Raleigh, N.C. (NC State / Heritage HS)
2	Na'Koma Simpson-Nealy	S	5-10	175	Jr.	Altamonte Springs, Fla. (Seminole HS)
3	Josh Perry	RB	6-0	205	So.	Orlando, Fla. (Edgewater HS)
3	Joshua Collins	LB	6-1	225	Jr.	Bryson City, N.C. (Swain County HS)
4	Kha'leal Sterling	WR	5-9	170	So.	Miami, Fla. (Miami Central HS)
4	Andre Jackson Jr.	CB	5-10	180	So.	Charlotte, N.C. (Hampton / Corvian Community School)
5	Michael Rossin	WR	6-0	200	So.	Live Oak, Fla. (Suwannee HS)
5	Braylon Jones	S	6-1	205	Sr.	Rockmart, Ga. (Reinhardt Univ. / Rockmart HS)
6	Marcus Striggles	WR	5-9	180	Jr.	North Lauderdale, Fla. (Concord Univ. / Dillard HS)
6	Jayden Cornelius	CB	5-10	175	So.	Fort Meade, Fla. (Durant HS)
7	Trey Walker	WR	5-10	175	So.	Hoschton, Ga. (Mill Creek HS)
7	Marseille Taylor	CB	6-2	190	5th	Sanford, Fla. (Stephen F. Austin / USF / Riverside City / Seminole HS)
8	Marlin Cochran	RB	6-0	200	Sr.	Miami, Fla. (Miami Northwestern HS)
8	Ryan McKinnis	LB	6-2	220	Sr.	Buford, Ga. (Appalachian State / Buford HS)
8	Ian Grissom	QB	6-1	170	So.	Rock Hill, S.C. (Rock Hill HS)
9	Bode Burns	TE	6-5	245	Jr.	Dunnellon, Fla. (Dunnellon HS)
9	Eldrick Robinson II	LB	6-0	230	5th	Pensacola, Fla. (RMU / Wake / Ga. Southern / Washington HS)
10	Santana Carlos	WR	5-11	175	Fr.	Hollywood, Fla. (Flanagan HS)
10	Jabari McWilliams	DL	6-0	270	Jr.	Picayune, Miss. (Mississippi Gulf Coast / Picayune HS)
11	Isaac Lee	QB	6-4	190	Jr.	Concord, N.C. (Jay M. Robinson HS)
11	Marco Patierno	LB	6-1	230	5th	Wake Forest, N.C. (Eastern Michigan / Elon / Heritage HS)
12	Jake Morrow	QB	6-0	195	Fr.	Grand Blanc, Mich. (Grand Blanc Community School)
12	Julian Quintero	S	6-0	200	Jr.	St. Augustine, Fla. (St. Augustine HS)
13	Richard Hollis	WR	5-8	170	So.	Pompano Beach, Fla. (Blanche Ely HS)
13	Caleb Turner-Allen	BAN	6-2	250	Jr.	Miami, Fla. (Dr. Michael M. Krop HS)
14	Kale Woodburn	WR	5-8	170	Jr.	Warner Robins, Ga. (Cincinnati / Houston County HS)
14	Vanier Baptiste III	DT	6-3	280	Jr.	Fort Myers, Fla. (Dunbar HS)
15	Michael Davis Jr.	WR	6-0	170	Fr.	Leesville, La. (Leesville HS)
15	Hank Bodine	LB	6-0	230	So.	Velva, N.D. (Velva DAG HS)
16	Caleb Tucker	QB	6-2	200	Fr.	Woodbridge, Va. (Woodbridge HS)
16	Chase Kerns	DL	6-1	280	Jr.	Decatur, Ga. (Georgia Military / Iowa Western CC / Cedar Grove HS)
17	Patrick Harding	QB	6-3	190	Fr.	Zephyrhills, Fla. (Zephyrhills HS)
17	Ja'Torian "Duke" Mack	S	5-11	185	So.	Eatonville, Fla. (Appalachian State / Edgewater HS)
18	Matthew Keener	WR	6-2	200	Jr.	Pilot Mountain, N.C. (East Surry HS)
18	Trystan Anderson	DL	6-4	255	5th	Buffalo Grove, Ill. (Drake / Buffalo Grove HS)
19	Mouhamadou Mane	WR	6-2	180	Fr.	Kathleen, Ga. (Veterans HS)
19	Cain Jefferson	BAN	6-3	225	So.	Decatur, Ga. (Columbia HS)
20	Jadarius Dobie	RB	5-8	170	Fr.	Lakeland, Fla. (Lakeland HS)
20	Andre Stewart	CB	6-0	185	5th	Kennesaw, Ga. (Kentucky / Towson / Tennessee / North Cobb HS)
21	Joshua Balloon Jr.	RB	5-9	170	Fr.	Tampa, Fla. (Gaither HS)
21	Nassor Ashenafi	SPUR	5-9	170	So.	Washington, D.C. (Mallard Creek (N.C.) HS)
22	Derrick Davis Jr.	RB	6-1	210	5th	Pittsburgh, Pa. (Pittsburgh / LSU / Gateway HS)
22	Quency Grant III	CB	5-10	170	Fr.	Columbia, S.C. (Ridge View HS)
24	Anthony Benjamin	RB	5-10	170	Sr.	Fort Myers, Fla. (Jacksonville State / Dunbar HS)
24	Terrell Poyser	CB	6-3	170	Fr.	Wildwood, Fla. (South Sumter HS)
25	Noah Best	RB	5-11	195	So.	Charlotte, N.C. (Corvian Community HS)
25	Caleb Young Jr.	S	6-0	210	Fr.	Gainesville, Fla. (Buchholz HS)
26	Devin Brown	CB	5-10	160	So.	Miami, Fla. (Northwestern HS)
27	Jermiyah Douglas	SPUR	5-10	175	Fr.	Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. (St. Thomas Aquinas HS)
27	Elijah Hadley	RB	5-10	200	Sr.	Charlotte, N.C. (West Liberty / Mallard Creek HS)
28	Chris Hobbs	CB	6-2	180	So.	Decatur, Ga. (Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School)
29	Christian Robbins	CB	6-1	190	So.	Orlando, Fla. (Jones HS)
30	Jaden Meeks	DL	6-2	225	Jr.	Charlotte, N.C. (Julius L. Chambers HS)
31	Alant'e Reese	S	6-2	205	Fr.	Fort Walton Beach, Fla. (Choctawhatchee HS)
32	AJ Mintze	S	6-0	185	So.	Miami, Fla. (Miami Norland HS)

NO.	NAME	POS.	HT.	WT.	YR.	HOMETOWN (PREVIOUS COLLEGE / HIGH SCHOOL)
33	Gavin Rowell	DL	6-3	255	5th	Melbourne, Fla. (Tusculum / Melbourne HS)
34	Jordan Martin-Durham	BAN	6-3	260	So.	Jacksonville, Fla. (Zarephath Academy)
35	Trey Berry III	LB	6-1	220	So.	Bartow, Fla. (Lakeland Christian HS)
37	Devon Wilson Jr.	CB	5-11	190	Fr.	Mauldin, S.C. (Mauldin HS)
38	Jayden Joselin	S	6-0	185	Fr.	North Lauderdale, Fla. (Monarch HS)
39	Jonathan Powell-Battle	DB	6-0	170	Fr.	Wilson, N.C. (Wilson Prep Academy)
40	Landon Pope	RB	5-10	225	Fr.	Canton, N.C. (Pisgah HS)
41	Beady Waddell V	LB	6-0	220	Jr.	Summerville, S.C. (West Mecklenburg (N.C.) HS)
42	Luke Waters	K/P	6-2	205	Fr.	Toccoa, Ga. (Stephens County HS)
43	Braeden Barger	LB	6-1	230	So.	Weddington, N.C. (Weddington HS)
44	Isaac McLellan	TE	6-2	240	5th	Rock Hill, S.C. (Northwestern HS)
45	Honor Paxton	LB	6-3	215	Fr.	Apex, N.C. (Middle Creek HS)
46	Nolan McClanahan	LB	6-1	220	So.	Lake Mary, Fla. (Lake Mary HS)
47	Dylan Harris	DL	6-5	245	Fr.	Ocala, Fla. (Vanguard HS)
48	Roman Jones	TE	6-3	230	Fr.	Robbinsville, N.C. (Robbinsville HS)
49	Bryce Hart	LB	6-2	220	So.	Ringgold, Ga. (Ringgold HS)
50	Xavier Nocco	LS	6-1	200	Fr.	Tampa, Fla. (Jesuit HS)
51	Aaron Sanez	OL	6-2	295	5th	Clearwater, Fla. (Clearwater HS)
52	Brayson McIver	OL	6-2	280	Jr.	Charlotte, N.C. (Coastal Carolina / Butler HS)
53	Zach Watson	OL	6-1	295	Sr.	Waycross, Ga. (Ware County HS)
55	Secrea Algie	OL	6-5	320	Jr.	Snellville, Ga. (Brookwood HS)
56	Aaron McIver	OL	6-2	305	5th	Charlotte, N.C. (Gardner-Webb / Butler HS)
57	Kaden Powell	LS	6-8	270	So.	Woodstock, Ga. (Brevard College / Etowah HS)
58	Isaac Boulger	OL	6-2	295	Jr.	Northport, Ala. (Auburn / Tuscaloosa County HS)
60	Bryan McCollum	K	5-8	165	So.	Sanford, N.C. (Southern Lee HS)
61	Marcus Trout	K	5-11	175	So.	Cocoa, Fla. (Cocoa HS)
62	Brian Wheat	OL	6-3	285	Fr.	Callahan, Fla. (West Nassau HS)
63	Thomas Guerrero	P	5-9	160	Jr.	Greenville, S.C. (Greenville HS)
64	Konrad Henderson	OL	6-3	305	Sr.	Alpharetta, Ga. (Chattahoochee HS)
65	Nicholas Foster	OL	6-1	295	So.	Charlotte, N.C. (Indiana Land HS)
66	Steven Hamby	OL	6-5	325	Sr.	Statesville, N.C. (Statesville HS)
68	Aidan Cooper	OL	6-4	305	So.	Charlotte, N.C. (Butler HS)
69	Cole Cooke	OL	6-8	330	So.	Fort Myers, Fla. (Riverdale HS)
71	Sawyer Nelson	OL	6-3	280	Fr.	Lenoir, N.C. (Hibriten HS)
72	Andrew Threatt	OL	6-6	285	5th	Charlotte, N.C. (Gardner-Webb / Metrolina Christian Academy)
73	Colin McClellan	OL	6-3	265	Fr.	Plant City, Fla. (Durant HS)
75	Renard Smith	OL	6-4	325	5th	Dallas, Ga. (University of Pikeville / East Paulding HS)
77	John Hammond	OL	6-5	320	So.	Spartanburg, S.C. (Spartanburg HS)
78	J'veon Bush	OL	6-5	320	So.	Orlando, Fla. (Jones HS)
79	Vito Moriana-Sigel	OL	6-5	315	5th	Estepona, Spain (Miss. Valley State / Trinity Valley CC / Kiski School)
80	Corey Swint	WR	6-0	170	Fr.	Miami, Fla. (Killian HS)
81	Emanuel Palmer	WR	5-8	160	Fr.	Collierville, Tenn. (Collierville HS)
82	Davon Washington	WR	5-8	160	Fr.	Altamonte Springs, Fla. (Lake Brantley HS)
83	Austin Cunningham	WR	6-0	185	Jr.	Columbia, S.C. (White Knoll HS)
84	Jemarius Reaves	WR	6-1	190	Jr.	Hopkins, S.C. (Lower Richland HS)
85	Paul Hartman III	TE	6-5	240	Jr.	Springfield, Ill. (Coastal Carolina / Springfield HS)
86	Davis Waddell	TE	6-5	220	Fr.	Cartersville, Ga. (Cartersville HS)
87	Jake Young	TE	6-3	245	5th	Waxhaw, N.C. (Charlotte / Marvin Ridge HS)
88	Cole Craddock	TE	6-4	245	So.	Tarboro, N.C. (Tarboro HS)
89	Ellis Chappell	WR	6-0	185	So.	Hickory, N.C. (Hickory HS)
90	Da'Shawn Davis	DL	6-2	235	5th	Charlotte, N.C. (Georgia Southern / Hough HS)
91	Jakoby Diamond	DL	6-1	305	So.	Cedartown, Ga. (Tuskegee / Cedartown HS)
92	Brandon Joseph II	DL	6-3	275	So.	Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. (St. Thomas Aquinas HS)
94	Malachi Hill	DL	6-3	295	Fr.	Burgaw, N.C. (Pender HS)
95	Mark Fitzgerald	K/P	6-1	210	Fr.	Dublin, Ireland (Clongowes Wood College SJ)
96	Jeremy Johnson II	DL	5-10	300	Jr.	Atlanta, Ga. (Concord University / Parkview HS)
97	Fernando Jeanty	DL	6-5	270	Jr.	North Miami Beach, Fla. (North Miami Beach HS)
98	Aiden Black	DL	6-1	295	Fr.	Concord, N.C. (Jay M. Robinson HS)
99	Adrian Stone	DL	6-3	290	Jr.	Fort Myers, Fla. (North Fort Myers HS)

WESTERN CAROLINA TWO-DEEP – AT CAMPBELL

CATAMOUNTS OFFENSE (PRO SPREAD)

QB	2	LEX THOMAS	5-11	205	JR.
	11	Isaac Lee	6-4	190	Jr.
- or -	17	Patrick Harding	6-3	190	Fr.
RB	3	JOSH PERRY	6-0	205	SO.
	8	Marlin Cochran	6-0	200	Sr.
- or -	22	Derrick Davis Jr.	6-1	210	5th
WR-X	5	MICHAEL ROSSIN	6-0	195	SO.
	10	Santana Carlos	5-11	175	Fr.
WR-Y	0	AJ COLOMBO	5-8	170	5TH
	6	Marcus Striggles	5-9	180	Jr.
WR-Z	1	JAI BOYD	6-2	175	SR.
	18	Matthew Keener	6-2	200	Jr.
- or -	13	Richard Hollis	5-8	165	Fr.
TE	9	BODE BURNS	6-4	244	JR.
- OR -	87	JAKE YOUNG	6-3	245	5TH
OL	72	ANDREW THREATT	6-2	305	5TH
	58	Isaac Boulger	6-2	295	Jr.
OL	56	AARON McIVER	6-2	305	5TH
	79	Vito Moriana-Sigel	6-5	315	5th
OL	53	ZACH WATSON	6-1	295	5TH
	52	Brayson McIver	6-2	280	Jr.
OL	58	ISAAC BOULGER	6-2	290	JR.
	67	Steven Hamby	6-5	325	Sr.
OL	55	SECREA ALGIE	6-5	310	JR.
	75	Renard Smith	6-4	325	5th

CATAMOUNTS DEFENSE (4-2-5)

DE	18	TRYSTAN ANDERSON	6-4	255	5TH.
	15	Gavin Rowell	6-3	255	5th.
- or -	30	Jaden Meeks	6-2	225	Jr.
NT	99	ADRIAN STONE	6-3	290	JR.
	91	Jakoby Diamond	6-1	305	So.
DT	97	FERNANDO JEANTY	6-3	270	JR.
	16	Chase Kerns	6-1	280	Jr.
BNDT	13	CALEB TURNER-ALLEN	6-2	250	JR.
	34	Jordan Martin-Durham	6-3	260	So.
LB	3	JOSHUA COLLINS	6-1	225	JR.
- OR -	8	RYAN MCKINNIS	6-2	220	SR.
LB	0	BLUE MONROE	6-1	225	5TH.
	15	Hank Bodine	6-0	260	So.
- or -	11	Marco Patierno	6-1	230	5th.
SPUR	1	KEN MOORE JR.	5-10	165	5TH.
	21	Nassor Ashenafi	5-9	170	So.
CB	4	ANDRE JACKSON JR.	5-10	180	SO.
	7	Marseille Taylor	6-2	190	5th.
SS	2	NA'KOMA SIMPSON-NEALY	5-10	175	JR.
	17	Ja'Torian Mack	5-11	185	So.
- or -	31	Alant'e Reese	6-2	205	Fr.
FS	5	BRAYLON JONES	6-1	190	SR.
	12	Julian Quintero	6-0	195	Jr.
CB	6	JAYDEN CORNELIUS	5-10	175	SO.
	29	Christian Robbins	6-1	190	So.

CATAMOUNTS SPECIAL TEAMS

KO	95	MARK FITZGERALD	6-1	210	FR.
- OR -	42	LUKE WATERS	6-2	205	FR.
PK	60	BRYAN MCCOLLUM	5-8	165	SO.
	95	Mark Fitzgerald	6-1	210	Fr.
H	63	THOMAS GUERRERO	5-9	160	SO.
P	95	MARK FITZGERALD	6-1	210	FR.
	63	Thomas Guerrero	5-9	160	So.
LS	57	KADEN POWELL	6-8	255	SO.
- OR -	50	XAVIER NOCCO	6-1	190	FR.
KOR	13	RICHARD HOLLIS	5-8	170	SO.
	20	JADARIUS DOBIE	5-8	170	Fr.
PR	0	AJ COLOMBO	5-8	170	5TH
	5	Michael Rossin	6-0	200	So.

WESTERN CAROLINA – THE LAST TIME IT HAPPENED

RETURNED A PUNT FOR A TD:

WCU: Daquan Patten at VMI – Nov. 20, 2021 (78 yards)
Opp: Isaiah Scott of Wofford – Oct. 6, 2025 (66 yards)

RETURNED A KICKOFF FOR A TD:

WCU: Dominic Dutton vs. Elon – Sept. 13, 2025 (97 yards)
Opp: Colton Hinton of Furman – Oct. 19, 2024 (96 yards)

RETURNED AN INTERCEPTION FOR A TD:

WCU: Ken Moore Jr. vs. Furman – Oct. 11, 2025 (64 yards)
Opp: Lance Wise of Mercer – Oct. 28, 2023 (9 yards)

SCORED ON A FUMBLE RECOVERY:

WCU: Cam'Ron Dabney vs. ETSU (43 yards) – Nov. 15, 2025
on offense: James Tyre vs. Elon (62 yards) – Sept. 13, 2025
Opp: Leroy Harris III of Chattanooga (75 yards) – Nov. 2, 2024

RECORDED A SAFETY:

WCU: TEAM vs. Samford – Oct. 24, 2015
Opp: Jordan Swain, #10/12 Mercer – Nov. 8, 2025

BLOCKED A PUNT:

WCU: Jacob Harris vs. Mercer – Oct. 9, 2021
Opp: Crosby Jackson of ETSU – Nov. 15, 2025

BLOCKED A FIELD GOAL ATTEMPT:

WCU: Ken Moore Jr., at #22 Elon – Sept. 14, 2024
Opp: Seth Foster of Wofford – Oct. 6, 2025

HAD A 100-YARD RUSHER:

WCU: Patrick Boyd Jr. (15–142 yds), vs. Gardner-Webb – Aug. 30, 2025
Opp: Jason Albritton of ETSU (20–125 yds) – Nov. 15, 2025

HAD A 100-YARD RECEIVER:

WCU: Malik Knight (5–141 yds), vs. #10/12 Mercer – Nov. 8, 2025
Opp: Jeremiah Harrison (5–139) and Hakeem Meggett (4–113) of ETSU – Nov. 15, 2025

TEAMMATES RUSHED FOR 100 YARDS IN THE SAME GAME:

WCU: Tyrie Adams (12-for-106 yds) & Connell Young (14-for-105 yds)
..... at Gardner-Webb – Sept. 14, 2018
Opp: Nate Hampton (28–132) and Quasean Holmes (13–116 yds) & Chris Lofton (3–102 yds)
..... of Gardner-Webb – Aug. 30, 2025

TEAMMATES HAD 100 RECEIVING YARDS IN THE SAME GAME:

WCU: James Tyre (7–112 yds) and Malik Knight (5–103 yds), at The Citadel – Oct. 18, 2025
Opp: Jeremiah Harrison (5–139) and Hakeem Meggett (4–113) of ETSU – Nov. 15, 2025

TEAMMATES HAD 100 YDS RUSHING AND RECEIVING IN THE SAME GAME:

WCU: Branson Adams (17–110 rushing yds) &
..... Censere Lee (7-for-127) – vs. ETSU – Nov. 11, 2023
Opp: Jason Albritton (20–125 yds rush) and Jeremiah Harrison (5–138 yds rec.)
..... and Hakeem Meggett (4–113 yds rec.) of ETSU – Nov. 15, 2025

THREW AT LEAST FOUR TOUCHDOWN PASSES:

WCU: Taron Dickens (7) vs. #10/12 Mercer – Nov. 8, 2025
Opp: Chase Artopoulos of #20/24 Chattanooga (5) – Oct. 7, 2023

PLAYER SCORED AT LEAST FOUR TOUCHDOWNS:

WCU: Camury Reid (4), vs. Samford – Sept. 20, 2025 (1 rushing TD, 3 receiving TDs)
Opp: Nate Hampton of Gardner-Webb – Aug. 30, 2025 (4 rushing TDs)

PLAYER KICKED AT LEAST FOUR FIELD GOALS:

WCU: Richard McCollum, at Samford – Sept. 24, 2022 (4-for-4 FGs)
Opp: Ray Early of Furman – Nov. 16, 2013 (6 FGs)

TEAM SCORED AT LEAST 50 POINTS:

WCU: 52 vs. Furman – Oct. 11, 2025
Opp: 52 by ETSU – Nov. 15, 2025

TEAM SCORED AT LEAST 30 POINTS IN A HALF:

WCU: 35 (2nd Half – 21 in 3rd, 14 in 4th) vs. Eastern Kentucky – Aug. 29, 2026
Opp: 31 by Gardner-Webb (2nd) – Aug. 30, 2025

TEAM SCORED AT LEAST 25 POINTS IN A QUARTER:

WCU: 29 vs. Samford (3rd) – Sept. 20, 2025
Opp: 21 by Wake Forest (1st/3rd) – Sept. 6, 2025

TEAM WAS SHUTOUT:

WCU: by No. 4 Oklahoma (76-0) – Sept. 11, 2021
Opp: Shorter (35-0) – Aug. 28, 2008
SoCon Opp: Wofford (24-0) – Nov. 5, 2005

WESTERN CAROLINA – INDIVIDUAL CAREER PASSING STATS

#2 LEX THOMASQB

2024 (AT NC STATE)	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yards	TD	Long	Sack	- Yds
Clemson	4	6	0	66.7	53	1	40	0	0
Stanford	1	2	1	50.0	12	0	12	0	0
SEASON.....	5	8	1	46.7	65	1	40	0	0

2025 (AT NC STATE)	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yards	TD	Long	Sack	- Yds
vs Campbell.....	2	6	0	33.3	18	0	12	0	0
vs Memphis	0	1	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0
SEASON.....	2	7	0	28.5	18	0	12	0	0

2026	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yards	TD	Long	Sack	- Yds
Eastern Kentucky.....	27	35	0	77.1	320	3	42	2	- 6
SEASON.....	27	35	0	77.1	320	3	42	2	- 6
CAREER	34	50	1	68.0	403	4	42	2	- 6

#11 ISAAC LEEQB

2024	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yards	TD	Long	Sack	- Yds
Did Not See Game Action									

2025	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yards	TD	Long	Sack	- Yds
Gardner-Webb	3	9	0	33.3	82	1	69	0	- 0
at Wake Forest	8	10	0	80.0	49	0	11	1	5
Elon.....	19	31	2	61.3	132	1	20	2	-14
VMI	1	4	0	25.0	16	0	16	0	0
SEASON.....	31	54	2	57.4	279	2	69	3	- 19
CAREER	31	54	2	57.4	279	2	69	3	19

#12 JAKE MORROWQB

2026	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yards	TD	Long	Sack	- Yds
SEASON.....									

#16 CALEB TUCKERQB

2026	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yards	TD	Long	Sack	- Yds
SEASON.....	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	- 0

#17 PATRICK HARDINGQB

2026	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yards	TD	Long	Sack	- Yds
SEASON.....	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	- 0

IAN GRISSOM.....QB

2025	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yards	TD	Long	Sack	- Yds
Did Not See Game Action									

2026	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yards	TD	Long	Sack	- Yds
SEASON.....	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	- 0
CAREER									

#5 MICHAEL ROSSIN.....WR

2025	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yards	TD	Long	Sack	- Yds
at VMI	0	1	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	- 0
SEASON.....	0	1	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	- 0

WESTERN CAROLINA – INDIVIDUAL CAREER RUSHING STATS

#2 LEX THOMASQB

2024

Game	No	Gain	Loss	Net	TD	Lg	Avg
Clemson	1	9	0	9	0	9	9.0
SEASON.....	1	9	0	9	0	9	9.0

2025 – Did not record rushing statistics

2026

Game	No	Gain	Loss	Net	TD	Lg	Avg
Eastern Kentucky.....	14	83	14	69	1	17	4.9
SEASON.....	14	83	14	69	1	17	4.9
CAREER.....	15	92	14	78	1	17	5.2

#3 JOSH PERRYRB

2025

Game	No	Gain	Loss	Net	TD	Lg	Avg
Furman	9	43	5	38	0	7	4.2
at The Citadel	1	1	0	1	0	1	1.0
SEASON.....	10	44	5	39	0	7	4.2

2026

Eastern Kentucky.....	16	38	7	31	0	11	1.9
SEASON.....	16	38	7	31	0	11	1.9
CAREER.....	26	82	12	70	0	11	2.7

#5 MICHAEL ROSSIN..... WR

2025

Game	No	Gain	Loss	Net	TD	Lg	Avg
ETSU	1	6	0	6	0	6	6.0
SEASON.....	1	6	0	6	0	6	6.0

2026

Eastern Kentucky.....	2	2	0	2	0	2	1.0
SEASON.....	2	2	0	2	0	2	1.0
CAREER.....	3	8	0	8	0	6	2.7

#8 MARLIN COCHRAN.....RB

2023

Game	No	Gain	Loss	Net	TD	Lg	Avg
at Arkansas.....	1	3	0	3	0	3	3.0
Charleston Southern.....	2	31	0	31	1	31	15.5
Mercer	1	0	2	-2	0	0	-2.0
ETSU	4	13	0	13	0	5	3.3
SEASON.....	8	47	2	45	1	31	5.6

2024

Game	No	Gain	Loss	Net	TD	Lg	Avg
at #24 NC State.....	1	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Campbell	3	9	0	9	0	6	3.0
at #22 Elon	4	8	0	8	0	3	2.0
at #10/9 Montana.....	2	12	0	12	0	10	6.0
The Citadel	8	25	1	24	0	6	3.0
at Furman	3	17	1	16	0	14	5.3
at #17/14 Mercer.....	3	1	9	(-8)	0	1	(-2.7)
#25/18 Chattanooga.....	9	16	2	14	0	6	1.6
at ETSU	4	19	0	19	0	8	4.8
VMI	9	48	1	47	0	17	5.2
at Samford.....	2	7	0	7	0	4	3.5
SEASON.....	48	162	14	148	0	17	3.1

2025 - Did not play

2026

Game	No	Gain	Loss	Net	TD	Lg	Avg
Eastern Kentucky.....	5	60	0	60	1	34	12.0
SEASON.....	5	60	0	60	1	34	12.0
CAREER.....	61	269	16	253	2	34	4.1

#11 ISAAC LEE.....QB

2024 – Did not play

2025

Game	No	Gain	Loss	Net	TD	Lg	Avg
Gardner-Webb	4	8	9	(-1)	0	7	-0.3
at Wake Forest	5	45	5	40	0	31	8.0
Elon.....	7	38	15	23	0	21	3.3
Furman	2	66	2	64	1	66	32.0
SEASON.....	18	157	31	126	1	66	7.0

#20 JADARIUS DOBIERB

2026

Game	No	Gain	Loss	Net	TD	Lg	Avg
SEASON.....							

#21 JOSHUA BALLOONRB

2026

Game	No	Gain	Loss	Net	TD	Lg	Avg
SEASON.....							

#22 DERRICK DAVIS JR..... RB

2021 - Did not record rushing statistics

2022 - (At LSU)

Game	No	Gain	Loss	Net	TD	Lg	Avg
vs UAB	5	29	1	28	0	16	5.6
vs Purdue	6	29	0	29	1	12	4.8
SEASON.....	11	58	1	57	1	16	5.1

2023 - (At Pittsburgh)

Game	No	Gain	Loss	Net	TD	Lg	Avg
vs Wofford	2	8	0	8	0	7	4.0
SEASON.....	2	8	0	8	0	7	4.0

2025 - (At Pittsburgh)

Game	No	Gain	Loss	Net	TD	Lg	Avg
vs Kent St.....	5	12	0	12	1	3	2.4
at Cincinnati	3	8	0	8	0	6	2.6
vs West Virginia	2	3	0	3	1	2	1.5
vs Youngstown St.	6	22	1	21	0	12	3.5
at SMU.....	1	0	2	-2	0	-2	-2.0
vs Clemson.....	4	8	1	7	0	6	1.7
at Boston College.....	5	23	2	21	0	12	4.2
SEASON.....	27	76	6	70	2	12	2.6

CAREER..... 40 142 7 135 3 16 3.4

#24 ANTHONY BENJAMIN...RB

2025

Game	No	Gain	Loss	Net	TD	Lg	Avg
vs Furman.....	3	21	0	21	0	14	7.0
SEASON.....	3	21	0	21	0	14	7.0

2026

Game	No	Gain	Loss	Net	TD	Lg	Avg
Eastern Kentucky.....	3	26	0	26	1	14	8.7
SEASON.....	3	26	0	26	1	14	8.7
CAREER.....	6	47	0	47	1	14	7.8

#25 NOAH BESTRB

2026

Game	No	Gain	Loss	Net	TD	Lg	Avg
SEASON.....							

#27 ELIJAH HADLEYRB

2026

Game	No	Gain	Loss	Net	TD	Lg	Avg
SEASON.....							

#34 JORDAN MARTIN-DURHAMQB

2025

Game	No	Gain	Loss	Net	TD	Lg	Avg
ETSU	2	1	0	1	1	1	0.5
SEASON.....	2	1	0	1	1	1	0.5

#40 LANDON POPE.....RB

2026

Game	No	Gain	Loss	Net	TD	Lg	Avg
SEASON.....							

WESTERN CAROLINA – INDIVIDUAL CAREER RECEIVING STATS

#0 AJ COLOMBO..... WR

2022

Game	No	Yds	TD	Long
Presbyterian	1	4	0	4
VMI	1	5	0	5
at #12 Mercer	1	1	0	1
The Citadel	2	26	0	19
SEASON.....	5	36	0	19

2023

Game	No	Yds	TD	Long
#7/8 Samford.....	5	79	1	24
at Eastern Kentucky	3	46	0	21
Charleston Southern	3	95	2	50
at The Citadel	5	40	1	22
at #20/24 Chattanooga.....	3	60	0	39
#3/4 Furman.....	2	27	1	18
Mercer	7	56	0	21
at Wofford.....	0	0	0	0
at VMI	3	35	0	18
SEASON.....	31	438	5	50

2024

Game	No	Yds	TD	Long
at #24 NC State.....	9	97	1	25
Campbell	4	59	0	26
at #22 Elon	5	51	0	22
at #10/9 Montana.....	5	44	1	21
Wofford.....	7	32	0	11
The Citadel	4	34	0	14
at #17/14 Mercer	5	66	1	24
#25/18 Chattanooga.....	6	37	1	12
at ETSU	3	25	0	15
VMI	4	29	0	14
at Samford.....	9	116	1	28
SEASON.....	61	590	5	28

2025

Game	No	Yds	TD	Long
INJURED				

2026

Game	No	Yds	TD	Long
Eastern Kentucky.....	6	90	0	25
SEASON.....	6	90	0	25
CAREER	103	1,154	10	50

#1 JAI BOYD..... WR

2023 – Did not record stats

2024

Game	No	Yds	TD	Long
Wofford.....	2	16	0	9
The Citadel	2	16	0	11
at Furman	3	102	0	56
at #17/14.....	2	20	0	19
#25/18 Chattanooga.....	2	19	0	12
at ETSU	2	37	0	34
VMI	3	77	0	56
at Samford.....	3	20	0	10
SEASON.....	19	307	0	56

2025

Game	No	Yds	TD	Long
#10/12 Mercer.....	2	21	1	11
SEASON.....	2	21	1	11

2026

Game	No	Yds	TD	Long
Eastern Kentucky.....	2	13	0	8
SEASON.....	2	13	0	8
CAREER	23	341	1	56

#3 JOSH PERRY RB

2025

Game	No	Yds	TD	Long
Furman	1	9	1	9
at The Citadel	1	(-2)	0	0
SEASON.....	2	7	1	9

2026

Game	No	Yds	TD	Long
Eastern Kentucky.....	6	29	2	12
SEASON.....	6	29	2	12

CAREER	8	36	3	12
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#4 KHA'LEAL STERLING..... WR

2025

Game	No	Yds	TD	Long
Did not record any statistics.....				
SEASON.....				

2026

Game	No	Yds	TD	Long
SEASON.....				

#5 MICHAEL ROSSIN WR

2025

Game	No	Yds	TD	Long
Samford.....	3	90	0	64
at Campbell	3	88	0	53
at Wofford.....	2	27	0	15
Furman	2	59	1	50
at Chattanooga.....	2	28	1	18
#10/12 Mercer.....	3	65	2	27
ETSU	4	89	1	61
at VMI	3	16	1	11
SEASON.....	22	462	6	64

2026

Game	No	Yds	TD	Long
Eastern Kentucky.....	6	94	0	42
SEASON.....	6	94	0	42

CAREER	28	556	6	64
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#6 MARCUS STRIGGLES..... WR

2024 (at Concord University)

Game	No	Yds	TD	Long
SEASON.....	48	600	1	51

2025 (at Western Carolina)

Game	No	Yds	TD	Long
Gardner-Webb	2	24	0	16
at Wake Forest	4	21	0	10
Elon.....	2	22	0	17
Samford.....	1	24	0	24
at Campbell	1	32	1	32
Furman	1	13	0	13
SEASON.....	11	136	1	32

2026

Game	No	Yds	TD	Long
SEASON.....				

CAREER	59	736	2	51
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#7 TREY WALKER..... TE

2025

Game	No	Yds	TD	Long
Gardner-Webb.....	1	25	1	25
Elon.....	2	10	0	6
SEASON.....	3	35	1	25

2026

Game	No	Yds	TD	Long
SEASON.....				

CAREER	3	35	1	25
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#8 MARLIN COCHRAN RB

2023

Game	No	Yds	TD	Long
at Arkansas.....	1	0	0	0
SEASON.....	1	0	0	0

2024

Game	No	Yds	TD	Long
at #24 NC State.....	2	19	0	10
Campbell	2	10	0	9
Wofford.....	2	23	0	13
The Citadel	3	22	0	14
at Furman	1	5	0	5
at #17/14 Mercer	1	6	0	6
#25/18 Chattanooga.....	2	31	0	26
at Samford.....	1	11	0	11
SEASON.....	14	127	0	14

CAREER	15	127	0	14
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#9 BODE BURNS..... TE

2024 – Did not record stats

2025

Game	No	Yds	TD	Long
at Campbell.....	1	23	0	23
SEASON.....	1	23	0	23

2026

Game	No	Yds	TD	Long
Eastern Kentucky.....	4	51	1	18
SEASON.....	4	51	1	18

CAREER	5	74	1	23
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#10 SANTANA CARLOS..... WR

2026

Game	No	Yds	TD	Long
Eastern Kentucky.....	1	36	0	36
SEASON.....	1	36	0	36

#13 RICHARD HOLLIS..... WR

2025

Game	No	Yds	TD	Long
Furman	1	4	0	4
SEASON.....	1	4	0	4

2026

Game	No	Yds	TD	Long
SEASON.....				

CAREER	1	4	0	4
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WESTERN CAROLINA – INDIVIDUAL CAREER RECEIVING STATS

#14 KALE WOODBURN WR

2026	No	Yds	TD	Long
Game				
SEASON.....				

#15 MICHAEL DAVIS JR. WR

2026	No	Yds	TD	Long
Game				
SEASON.....				

#18 MATTHEW KEENER WR

2026	No	Yds	TD	Long
Game				
SEASON.....				

#19 MOUHAMADOU MANE... WR

2026	No	Yds	TD	Long
Game				
SEASON.....				

#22 DERRICK DAVIS JR. RB

2024 – (at Pittsburgh)	No	Yds	TD	Long
Game				
at Cincinnati	1	3	0	3
Youngstown State	1	14	0	14
at Boston College.....	1	(-2)	0	0
SEASON.....	3	15	0	14

#24 ANTHONY BENJAMIN RB

2026	No	Yds	TD	Long
Game				
SEASON.....				

#80 COREY SWINT WR

2026	No	Yds	TD	Long
Game				
SEASON.....				

#83 AUSTIN CUNNINGHAM.. WR

2024	No	Yds	TD	Long
Game				
Did not record any statistics....				
SEASON.....				

#87 JAKE YOUNG..... TE

2025	No	Yds	TD	Long
Game				
Did not record any statistics....				
SEASON.....				

2026	No	Yds	TD	Long
Game				
SEASON.....				

2023	No	Yds	TD	Long
Game				
at The Citadel	1	0	0	0
ETSU	1	4	0	4
SEASON.....	2	4	0	4

2024	No	Yds	TD	Long
Game				
at #24 NC State	3	31	1	13
Campbell	3	41	0	18
at #22 Elon	3	31	0	13
at #10/9 Montana	1	8	0	8
Wofford	2	21	0	13
The Citadel	1	10	0	10
at Furman	4	38	0	17
at #17/14 Mercer	1	15	0	15
#25/18 Chattanooga.....	1	22	0	22
at ETSU	2	19	1	11
VMI	6	74	0	21
at Samford	1	11	0	11
SEASON.....	28	321	2	22

2025 at Charlotte	No	Yds	TD	Long
Game				
at Army	2	12	0	6
at East Carolina	2	18	0	12
SEASON.....	4	30	0	12
CAREER	34	355	2	22

#88 COLE CRADDOCK..... TE

2025	No	Yds	TD	Long
Game				
Did not record any statistics....				
SEASON.....				

2026	No	Yds	TD	Long
Game				
SEASON.....				
CAREER				

#89 ELLIS CHAPPELL WR

2025	No	Yds	TD	Long
Game				
Did not record any statistics....				
SEASON.....				

2026	No	Yds	TD	Long
Game				
SEASON.....				
CAREER				

CATAMOUNT CAREER, SINGLE-GAME HIGHS – OFFENSE & SPECIAL TEAMS (AT WCU)

JAI BOYD

Receptions.....3, 3x - MR, at Samford (2024)
 Receiving Yards102, at Furman (2024)
 Receiving TDs.....1, MERCER (2025)
 Long Reception56 yds, 2x MR VMI (2024)

ANTHONY BENJAMIN

Rushes3, vs. ECU (2026)
 Rushing Yards.....26, vs. ECU (2026)
 Rushing TDs.....1, vs. ECU (2026)

BODE BURNS

Receptions.....4, vs. ECU (2026)
 Receiving Yards51, vs. ECU (2026)
 Receiving TDs.....1, vs. ECU (2026)

SANTANA CARLOS

Receptions.....1, vs. ECU (2026)
 Receiving Yards36, vs. ECU (2026)
 Receiving TDs.....

MARLIN COCHRAN

Rushes9, 2x – MR vs VMI (2024)
 Rushing Yards.....60, vs. ECU (2026)
 Rushing TDs.....1, twice – MR: vs. ECU (2026)
 Receptions.....3, THE CITADEL (2024)
 Receiving Yards31, CHATTANOOGA (2024)

AJ COLOMBO

Receptions.....9, 2x - MR at Samford (2024)
 Receiving Yards116 yds, at Samford (2024)
 Receiving TDs.....2, CHA.SOUTHERN (2023)
 Punt Returns5, twice – MR: at #22 Elon (2024)
 Punt Return Yards..80 yds, CHA.SOUTHERN (2023)
 Long Punt Return.....40, CHA.SOUTHERN (2023)

JORDAN MARTIN-DURHAM

Rushes2, ETSU (2025)
 Rushing Yards.....1 yd, ETSU (2025)
 Rushing TDs.....1, ETSU (2025)

ISAAC LEE

Completions19, vs ELON (2025)
 Attempts31, vs ELON (2025)
 Passing Yards132, vs ELON (2025)
 Passing TDs.....1, twice – ELON (2025)
 Long Pass69 yds, GARDNER-WEBB (2025)
 Rushes7, vs ELON (2025)
 Rushing Yards.....64, FURMAN (2025)

ISAAC McLELLAN

Rushes1, at The Citadel (2025)
 Rushing Yards.....22, at The Citadel (2025)

JOSH PERRY

Rushes16, vs. ECU (2026)
 Rushing Yards.....60, vs. ECU (2026)
 Rushing TDs.....
 Receptions.....6, vs. ECU (2026)
 Receiving Yards29, vs. ECU (2026)
 Receiving TDs.....2, vs. ECU (2026)

MICHAEL ROSSIN

Receptions.....6, vs. ECU (2026)
 Receiving Yards94, vs. ECU (2026)
 Receiving TDs.....2, MERCER (2025)

MARCUS STRIGGLES

Receptions.....4, at Wake Forest (2025)
 Receiving Yards32, at Campbell (2025)
 Receiving TDs.....1, at Campbell (2025)

LEX THOMAS

Rushes14, vs. ECU (2026)
 Rushing Yards.....69, vs. ECU (2026)
 Rushing TDs.....1, vs. ECU (2026)
 Pass Attempts.....35, vs. ECU (2026)
 Pass Completions27, vs. ECU (2026)
 Passing Yards320, vs. ECU (2026)
 Passing TDs3, vs. ECU (2026)
 Receptions.....1, vs. ECU (2026)
 Receiving Yards4 yds, vs. ECU (2026)

TREY WALKER

Receptions.....2, vs ELON (2025)
 Receiving Yards25 yds, GARDNER-WEBB (2025)
 Receiving TDs.....1, GARDNER-WEBB (2025)

JAKE YOUNG

Receptions.....6, vs. VMI (2024)
 Receiving Yards74, vs. VMI (2024)
 Receiving TDs.....1, twice – MR: at ETSU (2024)

– WCU SPECIALISTS –

MARK FITZGERALD

Kickoffs.....6, vs. ECU (2026)
 Touchbacks.....4, vs. ECU (2026)
 Punts.....4, vs. ECU (2026)
 Punting Yards (Avg.)183 (45.8), vs. ECU (2026)

BRYAN McCOLLUM

Field Goals in a Game2, at VMI (2025)
 Long FG Made29 yds, at VMI (2025)
 Long FGA29 yds, at VMI (2025)
 PATs6-of-6, twice – MR: vs. ECU (2026)
 Consecutive Made PATs12 (active)

MARCUS TROUT

Field Goals.....1, 4x MR: vs The Citadel (2025)
 Long FG Made44 yds, vs Furman (2025)
 Long FGA44 yds, vs Furman (2025)
 PATs7-7, vs Furman (2025)
 Consecutive Made PATs47 (active)

ALL-TIME TOP WHITMIRE STADIUM ATTENDANCE FIGURES

1.	vs. Appalachian State	1994	15,247
2.	vs. Appalachian State	2004	14,714
3.	vs. #10/12 Mercer	2025	14,510
4.	vs. Appalachian State	2008	14,213
5.	vs. Appalachian State	2010	14,004
6.	vs. Appalachian State	1983	13,924
7.	vs. Appalachian State	1998	13,785
8.	vs. Furman	1978	13,778
9.	vs. Appalachian State	2006	13,742
10.	vs. EASTERN KENTUCKY	2026	13,482
11.	vs. Georgia Southern	1987	13,460
12.	vs. Charleston Southern	2023	13,357
13.	vs. The Citadel	2014	13,323
14.	vs. Appalachian State	2012	13,279
15.	vs. Furman	1989	13,227
16.	vs. Appalachian State	1989	13,118
17.	vs. VMI	2024	13,022
18.	vs. The Citadel	1992	12,818
19.	vs. VMI	2018	12,759
20.	vs. Furman	1985	12,635
21.	vs. Campbell	2024	12,506
22.	vs. Furman	1991	12,445
23.	vs. Samford	2023	12,410
24.	vs. Mars Hill	2015	12,348
25.	vs. The Citadel	2016	12,283
26.	vs. Appalachian State	1978	12,232
27.	vs. Appalachian State	1985	12,218
28.	vs. The Citadel	1984	12,204
29.	vs. Mercer	2023	12,154

CATAMOUNT CAREER, SINGLE-GAME HIGHS – DEFENSE (AT WCU)

TRYSTAN ANDERSON

Tackles..... 4, vs. ECU (2026)
Tackles for Loss..... 1.0, vs. ECU (2026)
Sacks..... 1.0, vs. ECU (2026)

NASSOR ASHENAFI

Tackles..... 5, vs. ECU (2026)
Fumbles Forced..... 1, vs. ECU (2026)
Fumbles Recovered..... 1, vs. ECU (2026)
Pass Break Ups..... 1, vs. ECU (2026)

VANIER BAPTISTE III

Tackles..... 3, at Chattanooga (2025)

HANK BODINE

Tackles..... 5, vs FURMAN (2025)
Tackles For Loss..... 1, vs ELON (2025)

JOSHUA COLLINS

Tackles..... 7, vs. ECU (2026)
Tackles For Loss..... 1.5, vs. ECU (2026)
Sacks..... 1.0, vs. ECU (2026)

JAYDEN CORNELIUS

Tackles..... 3, vs. ECU (2026)

JAKOBY DIAMOND

Tackles..... 1, vs. ECU (2026)

QUENCY GRANT III

Tackles..... 1, vs. ECU (2026)

ANDRE JACKSON JR.

Tackles..... 3, vs. ECU (2026)
Pass Break Ups..... 3, vs. ECU (2026)

FERNANDO JEANTY

Tackles..... 2, vs. ECU (2026)

BRAYLON JONES

Tackles..... 1, vs. ECU (2026)

CHASE KERNS

Tackles..... 1, vs. ECU (2026)

JA'TORIAN MACK

Tackles..... 1, vs. ECU (2026)

JORDAN MARTIN-DURHAM

Tackles..... 1, vs. ECU (2026)

RYAN MCKINNIS

Tackles..... 10, at Chattanooga (2025)
Sacks..... 2, at Chattanooga (2025)
Tackles for Loss..... 2, at Chattanooga (2025)

ISAAC MCLELLAN

Tackles..... 2, GARDNER-WEBB (2025)
Forced Fumbles..... 1, at #10/9 Montana (2024)

AJ MINTZE

Tackles..... 1, vs. ECU (2026)

BLUE MONROE

Tackles..... 8, at Furman (2024)
Tackles for Loss..... 2.0, CAMPBELL (2024)
Sacks..... 1.0, at Samford (2024)

KEN MOORE JR.

Tackles..... 10, at The Citadel (2025)
Tackles for Loss..... 2.0, THE CITADEL (2024)
Sacks..... 1.0, at Wofford (2025)
Forced Fumble..... 1, at #22 Elon (2024)
Interceptions..... 2 vs FURMAN (2025)
Blocked Kicks..... 1, at #24 Elon (2024)
Touchdowns..... 1, 2x - MR: FURMAN (2025)
Double-Digit Tackles..... 1x

MARCO PATIERNO

Tackles..... 3, vs. ECU (2026)

TERRELL POYSER

Tackles..... 1, vs. ECU (2026)

JULIAN QUINTERO

Tackles..... 3, vs. ECU (2026)
Forced Fumble..... 1, at Wofford (2025)

ALANT'E REESE

Tackles..... 5, vs. ECU (2026)

GAVIN ROWELL

Tackles..... 2, at VMI (2025)

NA'KOMA SIMPSON-NEALY

Tackles..... 3, three times – MR: vs. ECU (2026)

ADRIAN STONE

Tackles..... 2, at Chattanooga (2025)

MARSEILLE TAYLOR

Tackles..... 4, GARDNER-WEBB (2025)
Tackles for Loss..... 1.5, vs FURMAN (2025)
Sacks..... 1.0, at VMI (2025)
Interceptions..... 1, vs. ECU (2026)
Pass Break Ups..... 1, vs. ECU (2026)

CALEB TURNER-ALLEN

Tackles..... 2, vs. ECU (2026)
Tackles for Loss..... 1.0, vs. ECU (2026)
Sacks..... 1.0, vs. ECU (2026)

GAME ONE • SAT., AUG. 29, 2026 • CULLOWHEE • ATT: 13,482		
	EASTERN KENTUCKY	21
	RV/RV WESTERN CAROLINA	45

CULLOWHEE – Lex Thomas threw for 320 yards and three touchdowns, including a pair to Josh Perry, and added a fourth-quarter rushing score as Western Carolina rallied for a 45-21 season-opening victory over Eastern Kentucky on Saturday night at E.J. Whitmire Stadium / Bob Waters Field.

The Catamounts rallied from seven-point deficits twice and erased a 14-10 halftime deficit, outscoring the Colonels 35-7 after intermission to secure their first season-opening victory since 2022. A crowd of 13,482 fans, the 10th-largest in E.J. Whitmire Stadium history, was on hand to witness the debut of the stadium's latest facility enhancements, including the new playing surface, new lights, updated videoboard, and premium seating additions.

Thomas, who earned the starting nod out of fall camp, connected on 10 of his first 11 passes on the night on the way to finishing 27-of-35 through the air. Despite the early completion success, the Raleigh, N.C., transfer had just 67 passing yards at the break. He found his rhythm after halftime, completing 11-of-15 passes in the third quarter for 180 yards and three touchdowns on the way to a career-best 320-yard passing performance.

Thomas added a team-best 69 yards rushing with a score, and even recorded a reception and four receiving yards as he collected a batted ball for the completion.

Eight different receivers caught passes with three posting six receptions apiece. Michael Rossin finished with six catches for a team-best 94 yards, while AJ Colombo made his return to the turf, going for 90 yards on six touches. Perry caught six passes, including two touchdowns, finishing with 29 receiving yards while adding 31 yards rushing. Bode Burns finished with four catches for 51 yards.

Behind Thomas on the ground, Marlin Cochran ran five times for 60 yards and rumbled 34 yards for WCU's first touchdown of the season. Anthony Benjamin capped the scoring with a 14-yard sprint in the game's final minute to provide the final tally.

Western Carolina amassed 508 yards of total offense, including 320 through the air and 188 on the ground, while recording 28 first downs.

For Eastern Kentucky (0-1), quarterback Tyler Travers finished 22-for-34 with three touchdown passes and one interception that came on a deflection in his first collegiate start. He targeted receiver Elijah Caldwell 12 times, completing six for a game-high 102 yards and a touchdown, with Jarvis Hayes finishing with 47 yards and a score on five catches.

Joshua Collins led all Catamount defenders with seven total stops, including 1.5 tackles for loss with a QB sack. Ken Moore Jr. and Alant'e Reese were both credited with five stops apiece, with Moore halving a TFL. Transfer defensive lineman Trystan Anderson and Ashenafi both had four tackles in the win, Anderson adding the second of two WCU sacks and Ashenafi recovering a fumble.

Transfer corner Andre Jackson Jr. impressed in his Catamount debut, recording three pass breakups and four tackles. Marseille Taylor collected his first interception in a Catamount uniform.

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	Score	
RV Eastern Kentucky	7	7	7	0	21	Record: (0-1)
RV/RV Western Carolina	7	3	21	14	45	Record: (1-0)

Scoring Summary:

1st	9:38	EKU	Elijah Caldwell 18 yd pass from Tyler Travers (Buzz Flabiano kick) – 10 plays, 75 yds, 5:22	EKU 7	WCU 0
	0:15	WCU	Marlin Cochran 34 yd run (Bryan McCollum kick) – 7 plays, 89 yds, 3:08	EKU 7	WCU 7
2nd	1:57	EKU	Brayden Latham 9 yd pass from Tyler Travers (Buzz Flabiano kick) – 12 plays, 81 yds, 6:28	EKU 14	WCU 7
	0:00	WCU	Bryan McCollum 20 yd field goal – 8 plays, 39 yds, 1:49	EKU 14	WCU 10
3rd	12:47	WCU	Bode Burns 18 yd pass from Lex Thomas (Bryan McCollum kick) – 6 plays, 75 yds, 2:13	EKU 14	WCU 17
	8:31	WCU	Josh Perry 12 yd pass from Lex Thomas (Bryan McCollum kick) – 6 plays, 60 yds, 2:50	EKU 14	WCU 24
	3:38	WCU	Josh Perry 6 yd pass from Lex Thomas (Bryan McCollum kick) – 7 plays, 50 yds, 2:27	EKU 14	WCU 31
	0:37	EKU	Jarvis Hayes 15 yd pass from Tyler Travers (Buzz Flabiano kick) – 7 plays, 75 yds, 3:01	EKU 21	WCU 31
4th	2:27	WCU	Lex Thomas 15 yd run (Bryan McCollum kick) – 5 plays, 53 yds, 0:56	EKU 21	WCU 38
	0:47	WCU	Anthony Benjamin 14 yd run (Bryan McCollum kick) – 3 plays, 26 yds, 0:49	EKU 21	WCU 45

	EKU	WCU
FIRST DOWNS	20	28
RUSHES-YARDS (NET)	29-65	40-188
PASSING YDS (NET)	305	320
Passes Comp-Att-Int.....	22-34-1	27-35-0
TOTAL OFFENSE PLAYS-YARDS	63-370	75-508
Fumble Returns-Yards.....	1-1	0-0
Punt Returns-Yards.....	0-0	2-8
Kickoff Returns-Yards.....	4-230	6-387
Interception Returns-Yards.....	0-0	1-8
Punts (Number-Avg).....	5-41.2	4-45.8
Fumbles-Lost.....	1-1	0-0
Penalties-Yards.....	9-74	8-80
Possession Time.....	27:45	32:15
Third-Down Conversions.....	5 of 13	8 of 14
Fourth-Down Conversions.....	2 of 3	0 of 2
Red-Zone Scores-Chances.....	3-3	6-6
Sacks By: Number-Yards.....	2-11	3-18

RUSHING: EKU – Brayden Latham 16-41; Cortez Stone 2-19; Brady Hensley 6-15; Tyler Travers 5-(-10); WCU – Lex Thomas 14-69; Marlin Cochran 5-60; Josh Perry 16-31; Anthony Benjamin 3-26; Michael Rossin 2-2.

PASSING: EKU – Tyler Travers 22-34-1, 305; WCU – Lex Thomas 27-35-0, 320.

RECEIVING: EKU – Elijah Caldwell 6-102; Jarvis Hayes 5-47; Jackson House 2-37; Caeleb Schlachter 2-37; Brady Hensley 2-36; Cameron Hergott 3-29; Brayden Latham 2-17; WCU – Michael Rossin 6-94; AJ Colombo 6-90; Bode Burns 4-51; Santana Carlos 1-36; Josh Perry 6-29; Jai Boyd 2-13; Lex Thomas 1-4; Jake Young 1-3.

INTERCEPTIONS: EKU – none; WCU – Marseille Taylor 1-8.

FUMBLES (FF-FR): EKU – none; WCU – Nassor Ashenafi 1-1;

SACKS (UA-AJ): EKU – Caleb Redd 1-1; Miller Payne 0.5-5; Nasir Spruill 0.5-5; WCU – Joshua Collins 1-10; Trystan Anderson 1-6; Caleb Turner-Allen 1-2.

TACKLES (UA-AJ): EKU – Jeff Kinley 7-5; Derek Taylor 3-7; Aden Tagaloa-Nelson 4-3; Cameron Jessee 3-4; Jack McGrath 4-2; Daviyon Hawkins-Ingram 2-3; Jayden Marable 2-2; Kaden Smith 1-3; Nasir Spruill 3-1; Caleb Redd 2-2; Keshawn Hayden 1-2; Brock Driver 2-1; Jackson Marshall 1-1; Payne Miller 0-2; DJ Galva 0-1; Cristian Conyer 0-1; Jackson House 1-0; Kaleb Neal 1-0; Jack Chappell 1-0; Braylon Newcomb 1-0. WCU – Joshua Collins 4-3; Ken Moore Jr. 1-4; Nassor Ashenafi 3-2; Alant'e Reese 3-2; Trystan Anderson 4-0; Na'koma Simpson-Nealy 2-1; Andre Jackson Jr. 3-0; Jayden Cornelius 3-0; Marco Paterno 2-1; Julian Quintero 2-1; Ryan McKinnis 1-1; Caleb Turner-Allen 1-1; Hank Bodine 1-1; Fernando Jeanty 1-1; Braylon Jones 0-1; Marseille Taylor 0-1; Chase Kerns 0-1; Ja'Torian Mack 0-1; Quincy Grant III 0-1; Terrell Poyser 0-1; AJ Mintze 1-0; Gavin Rowell 0-1; Jordan Martin-Durham 0-1; Jakoby Diamond 0-1; Adrian Stone 0-1.

GAME TWO • SAT., SEPT. 5, 2026 • BUIES CREEK, NC • ATT:		
	#24/RV WESTERN CAROLINA	
	-/RV CAMPBELL	

BUIES CREEK, NC –

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	Score	
#24/RV Western Carolina						Record: ()
Campbell						Record: ()

Scoring Summary:

2026 Western Carolina University Football
Overall Statistics (as of Sep 2, 2026)

Team Statistics	WCU	OPP
SCORING	45	21
Points Per Game	45.00	21.00
FIRST DOWNS	28	20
Rushing	9	3
Passing	15	16
Penalty	4	1
RUSHING YARDAGE	188	65
Yards gained	209	85
Yards lost	21	20
Attempts	40	29
Avg Per Attempt	4.7	2.2
Avg Per Game	188.0	65.0
TDs Rushing	3	0
PASSING YARDAGE	320	305
Att-Comp-Int	35-27-0	34-22-1
Avg Per Attempt	9.14	8.97
Avg Per Catch	11.85	13.86
Avg Per Game	320.00	305.00
TDs Passing	3	3
TOTAL OFFENSE	508	370
Total Plays	75	63
Avg Per Play	6.8	5.9
Avg Per Game	508.0	370.0
KICK RETURNS: #-YARDS	1-59	2-39
PUNT RETURNS: #-YARDS	2-8	0-0
INT RETURNS: #-YARDS	1-8	0-0
KICK RETURN AVERAGE	59.00	19.50
PUNT RETURN AVERAGE	4.00	0.00
INT RETURN AVERAGE	8.00	0.00
FUMBLES-LOST	0-0	1-1
PENALTIES-YARDS	8-80	9-74
Avg Per Game	80.00	74.00
PUNTS-YARDS	4-183	5-206
Avg Per Punt	45.75	41.20
Net Punt Avg	45.75	39.60
KICKOFFS-YARDS	6-387	4-230
Avg Per Kick	64.50	57.50
Net Kick Avg	41.33	30.25
TIME OF POSSESSION	00:32:15	00:27:45
Per Game	32:15	27:45
3RD-DOWN CONVERSIONS	8-14	5-13
3rd-Down Pct	57.14 %	38.46 %
4TH-DOWN CONVERSIONS	0-2	2-3
4th-Down Pct	0.00 %	66.67 %
SACKS BY-YARDS	3-18	2-11
MISC YARDS	0	0
TOUCHDOWNS SCORED	6	3
FIELD GOALS-ATTEMPTS	1-1	0-0
ON-SIDE KICKS	1-1	0-0
RED-ZONE SCORES	6-6	3-3
RED-ZONE TOUCHDOWNS	5-6	3-3
PAT-ATTEMPTS	6-6	3-3
ATTENDANCE	13,482	0
Dates-Avg Per Date	1-13,482	0-0
Neutral Site #-Avg	-	0-0

Conf	Date	Opponent	WL	Score	Record	Time	Attend
	08/29/2026	EASTERN KY.	W	45-21	1-0 , 0-0	03:27	13,482

* = Conference game

Score by Quarters	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Total
Western Caro.	7	3	21	14	45
Opponents	7	7	7	0	21

2026 Western Carolina University Football Overall Statistics (as of Sep 2, 2026)

#	Rushing	GP	ATT	GAIN	LOSS	NET	AVG	TD	LG	AVG/G
2	Thomas, Lex	1	14	83	14	69	4.9	1	17	69.00
3	Cochran, Marlin	1	5	60	0	60	12.0	1	34	60.00
8	Perry, Josh	1	16	38	7	31	1.9	0	11	31.00
24	Benjamin, Anthony	1	3	26	0	26	8.7	1	14	26.00
5	Rossin, Michael	1	2	2	0	2	1.0	0	2	2.00
	Total	1	40	209	21	188	4.7	3	34	188.00
	Opponents	1	29	85	20	65	2.2	0	15	65.00

#	Passing	GP	Rating	COMP-ATT-INT	PCT	YDS	TD	LG	AVG/G
2	Thomas, Lex	1	182.23	27-35-0	77.14 %	320	3	42	320.00
	Total	1	182.23	27-35-0	77.14 %	320	3	42	320.00
	Opponents	1	163.29	22-34-1	64.71 %	305	3	30	305.00

#	Receiving	GP	NO	YDS	AVG	TD	LG	AVG/G
5	Rossin, Michael	1	6	94	15.67	0	42	94.00
0	Colombo, AJ	1	6	90	15.00	0	25	90.00
9	Burns, Bode	1	4	51	12.75	1	18	51.00
10	Carlos, Santana	1	1	36	36.00	0	36	36.00
3	Perry, Josh	1	6	29	4.83	2	12	29.00
1	Boyd, Jai	1	2	13	6.50	0	8	13.00
2	Thomas, Lex	1	1	4	4.00	0	4	4.00
87	Young, Jake	1	1	3	3.00	0	3	3.00
18	Keener, Matthew	1	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00
	Total	1	27	320	11.85	3	42	320.00
	Opponents	1	22	305	13.86	3	30	305.00

#	Punt Returns	NO	YRDS	AVG	TD	LG
0	Colombo, AJ	2	8	4.00	0	5
	Total	2	8	4.00	0	5
	Opponents	0	0	NaN	0	0

#	Interceptions	NO	YRDS	AVG	TD	LG
7	Taylor, Marseille	1	8	8.00	0	8
	Total	1	8	8.00	0	8
	Opponents	0	0	0.0	0	0

#	Kick Returns	NO	YRDS	AVG	TD	LG
13	Hollis, Richard	1	59	59.00	0	59
	Total	1	59	59.00	0	59
	Opponents	2	39	19.50	0	22

#	Fumble Returns	NO	YRDS	AVG	TD	LG
No data to report.						

2026 Western Carolina University Football
Overall Statistics (as of Sep 2, 2026)

#	Scoring	TD	FG	PAT					SAF	PTS
				KICK	RUSH	RCV	PASS	DXP		
3	Perry, Josh	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	12
60	McCollum, Bryan	—	1	6-6	—	—	—	—	—	9
24	Benjamin, Anthony	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	6
9	Burns, Bode	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	6
8	Cochran, Marlin	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	6
2	Thomas, Lex	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	6
Total		6	1	6-6	—	—	—	—	—	45
Opponents		3	—	3-3	—	—	—	—	—	21

#	Field Goals	FGM-FGA	PCT	I20	20-29	30-39	40-49	50+	LG	BLK
60	McCollum, Bryan	1-1	100.00 %	0-0	1-1	0-0	0-0	0-0	20	0
Total		1-1	100.00 %	0-0	1-1	0-0	0-0	0-0	20	0
Opponents		0-0	0.00 %	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0

FG Sequence	Western Caro.	Opponents
Eastern Ky.	(20)	-

Numbers in (parentheses) indicate field goal was made.

#	Total Offense	G	Plays	Rush	Pass	Total	AVG/G
2	Thomas, Lex	1	49	69	320	389	389.00
8	Cochran, Marlin	1	5	60	0	60	60.00
3	Perry, Josh	1	16	31	0	31	31.00
24	Benjamin, Anthony	1	3	26	0	26	26.00
5	Rossin, Michael	1	2	2	0	2	2.00
Total		1	75	188	320	508	508.00
Opponents		1	63	65	305	370	370.00

#	Punting	NO	YDS	AVG	LG	TB	FC	I20	50+	BLK
95	Fitzgerald, Mark	4	183	45.75	52	0	2	2	2	0
Total		4	183	45.75	52	0	2	2	2	0
Opponents		5	206	41.20	52	0	2	2	1	0

#	Kickoffs	NO	YDS	AVG	TB	OB
95	Fitzgerald, Mark	6	387	64.5	4	0
Total		6	387	64.5	4	0
Opponents		4	230	57.5	2	1

2026 Western Carolina University Football
Overall Statistics (as of Sep 2, 2026)

#	All Purpose	G	RUSH	RCV	PR	KR	IR	Total	AVG/G
0	Colombo, AJ	1	0	90	8	0	0	98	98.00
5	Rossin, Michael	1	2	94	0	0	0	96	96.00
2	Thomas, Lex	1	69	4	0	0	0	73	73.00
8	Cochran, Marlin	1	60	0	0	0	0	60	60.00
3	Perry, Josh	1	31	29	0	0	0	60	60.00
13	Hollis, Richard	1	0	0	0	59	0	59	59.00
9	Burns, Bode	1	0	51	0	0	0	51	51.00
10	Carlos, Santana	1	0	36	0	0	0	36	36.00
24	Benjamin, Anthony	1	26	0	0	0	0	26	26.00
1	Boyd, Jai	1	0	13	0	0	0	13	13.00
7	Taylor, Marseille	1	0	0	0	0	8	8	8.00
87	Young, Jake	1	0	3	0	0	0	3	3.00
Total		1	188	320	8	59	8	583	583.00
Opponents		1	65	305	0	39	0	409	409.00

2026 Western Carolina University Football
Overall Statistics (as of Sep 2, 2026)

#	Defensive Leaders	GP	Tackles				Sacks NO-YDS	Pass Defense			Fumbles		Blocked	
			Solo	ASST	TOT	TFL-YDS		INT-YDS	BU	QBH	RCV-YDS	FF	KICK	SAF
3	Collins, Joshua	1	4	3	7.0	1.5-11	1.0-10	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
21	Ashenafi, Nassor	1	3	2	5.0	—	—	—	1	—	1-0	1	—	—
1	Moore Jr., Ken	1	1	4	5.0	0.5-1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
31	Reese, Alant'e	1	3	2	5.0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
18	Anderson, Trystan	1	4	—	4.0	1.0-6	1.0-6	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
6	Cornelius, Jayden	1	3	—	3.0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
4	Jackson Jr., Andre	1	3	—	3.0	—	—	—	3	—	—	—	—	—
11	Patierno, Marco	1	2	1	3.0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
12	Quintero, Julian	1	2	1	3.0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2	Simpson-Nealy, Na'koma	1	2	1	3.0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
15	Bodine, Hank	1	1	1	2.0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
97	Jeanty, Fernando	1	1	1	2.0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
8	McKinnis, Ryan	1	1	1	2.0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
13	Turner-Allen, Caleb	1	1	1	2.0	1.0-2	1.0-2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
91	Diamond, Jakob	1	—	1	1.0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
22	Grant III, Quency	1	—	1	1.0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5	Jones, Braylon	1	—	1	1.0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
16	Kerns, Chase	1	—	1	1.0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
17	Mack, Ja'Torian	1	—	1	1.0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
34	Martin-Durham, Jordan	1	—	1	1.0	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
32	Mintze, AJ	1	1	—	1.0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
24	Poyser, Terrell	1	—	1	1.0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
33	Rowell, Gavin	1	—	1	1.0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
99	Stone, Adrian	1	—	1	1.0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
7	Taylor, Marseille	1	—	1	1.0	—	—	1-8	1	—	—	—	—	—
24	Benjamin, Anthony	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
9	Burns, Bode	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
8	Cochran, Marlin	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
60	McCollum, Bryan	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3	Perry, Josh	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2	Thomas, Lex	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total		1	32	28	60.0	4.0-20	3.0-18	1-8	5	1	1-0	1	—	—
Opponents		1	39	40	79.0	7.0-20	2.0-11	—	1	4	—	—	—	—