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## BIG SOUTH-OVC FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION REVEALS PRESEASON TOP 63 WATCH LIST

**NASHVILLE, Tenn.** ([www.BigSouthOVCFootball.com](http://www.BigSouthOVCFootball.com)) – Ahead of its inaugural season, the Big South-OVC Football Association revealed its preseason Top 63 players entering the 2023 season today as part of Media Day activities at the Sheraton Music City Hotel in Nashville, Tenn. The Watch List is comprised of top returnees by position, most of which are returning All-Conference and All-America honorees, plus 2023 Preseason All-Americans, and is listed below.

### QUARTERBACK (3)

NAME	SCHOOL	YR	NOTES
Zevi Eckhaus	Bryant	Jr.	2022 2 <sup>nd</sup> Team All-Big South, Sophomore All-America
Draylen Ellis	Tennessee State	Sr.	2021 2 <sup>nd</sup> Team All-OVC; 2020 OVC Fr. of the Year
Paxton DeLaurent	Southeast Missouri	Jr.	2022 OVC All-Newcomer Team

### RUNNING BACK (5)

NAME	SCHOOL	YR	NOTES
Juwon Farri	Eastern Illinois	Sr.	2021 Big South Off. Player of the Year; 3x All-Conf.
Sam Franklin	UT Martin	R-So.	2022 2 <sup>nd</sup> Team All-OVC; OVC Freshman of the Year
Narii Gaither	Gardner-Webb	R-Sr.	2022 1 <sup>st</sup> Team All-Big South; 3x All-Conference
Geno Hess	Southeast Missouri	Gr.	2022 1 <sup>st</sup> Team All-OVC; 2x All-America; Payton Finalist
JD Moore	Charleston Southern	R-Jr.	2022 2 <sup>nd</sup> Team All-Big South

### WIDE RECEIVER (5)

NAME	SCHOOL	YR	NOTES
Ryan Flournoy	Southeast Missouri	Sr.	2022 1 <sup>st</sup> Team All-OVC
Brennan McGuire	Gardner-Webb	Gr.	2022 2 <sup>nd</sup> Team All-Great Midwest
Landon Ruggieri	Bryant	Jr.	2022 1 <sup>st</sup> Team All-Big South
DeVonte Tanksley	UT Martin	R-Jr.	2022 2 <sup>nd</sup> Team All-OVC
Justin Thomas	Eastern Illinois	Gr.	4x All-MIAA; D3 All-America

### TIGHT END (2)

NAME	SCHOOL	YR	NOTES
Jihad Edmond	Bryant	Sr.	2022 2 <sup>nd</sup> Team All-Big South
DJ Nelson	UT Martin	R-So.	2022 1 <sup>st</sup> Team All-OVC

### OFFENSIVE LINE (9)

NAME	SCHOOL	YR	NOTES
Zack Gieg	Southeast Missouri	Sr.	2022 1 <sup>st</sup> Team All-OVC; Rimington Award Winner
Nathan Hodnett	Tennessee Tech	Jr.	2022 2 <sup>nd</sup> Team All-OVC
Ethan Johnson	Lindenwood	Jr.	2022 2 <sup>nd</sup> Team All-OVC
Lamar Morgan	UT Martin	Sr.	2022 2 <sup>nd</sup> Team All-OVC, 2x All-Conference
Gavin Olson	UT Martin	Sr.	2022 1 <sup>st</sup> Team All-OVC, All-American, 2x All-Conference
Chad Strickland	Eastern Illinois	Sr.	2022 2 <sup>nd</sup> Team All-OVC; 2019 Freshman All-America
Gabe Thompson	Gardner-Webb	R-Sr.	2022 1 <sup>st</sup> Team All-Big South, 2x All-Conference

Gareth Warren	Lindenwood	Jr.	2022 2 <sup>nd</sup> Team All-OVC
Jamichael Watts	Bryant	Sr.	2022 2 <sup>nd</sup> Team All-Big South

#### DEFENSIVE LINE (7)

NAME	SCHOOL	YR	NOTES
Terrell Allen	Tennessee State	Sr.	2022 1 <sup>st</sup> Team All-OVC, 2x All-Conference
Kail Dava	Tennessee Tech	Gr.	2022 2 <sup>nd</sup> Team All-OVC
Daylan Dotson	UT Martin	R-Jr.	2022 1 <sup>st</sup> Team All-OVC
Kenny Dyson	Bryant	Sr.	2022 1 <sup>st</sup> Team All-Big South
Ty French	Gardner-Webb	Sr.	2022 Big South Def. Player of the Year; 3x All-Conf.
Steven Lewis	Southeast Missouri	Sr.	2022 2 <sup>nd</sup> Team All-OVC
Kobe McClendon	Lindenwood	So.	2022 2 <sup>nd</sup> Team All-OVC; OVC All-Newcomer Team

#### LINEBACKER (9)

NAME	SCHOOL	YR	NOTES
Ty Anderson	Gardner-Webb	So.	2022 Big South Def. Freshman of the Year
Keandre Booker	Southeast Missouri	Sr.	2022 2 <sup>nd</sup> Team All-OVC
Joe Casale	Robert Morris	R-Sr.	2022 2 <sup>nd</sup> Team All-Big South
James Green	Tennessee State	Gr.	2021 2 <sup>nd</sup> Team All-OVC
Jacquez McGowan	Tennessee Tech	So.	2022 OVC All-Newcomer Team
William McRaney	Gardner-Webb	Sr.	2022 1 <sup>st</sup> Team All-Big South, 2x All-Conference
Bryce Norman	Southeast Missouri	Jr.	2022 1 <sup>st</sup> Team All-OVC, All-America
K'Vaughan Pope	Tennessee State	Gr.	2022 2 <sup>nd</sup> Team All-OVC
Jamar Shegog	Robert Morris	R-Sr.	2021 2 <sup>nd</sup> Team All-Big South
Elijawah Tolbert	Eastern Illinois	Jr.	2022 1 <sup>st</sup> Team All-OVC

#### DEFENSIVE BACK (11)

NAME	SCHOOL	YR	NOTES
Darion Bolden	Lindenwood	Sr.	2022 1 <sup>st</sup> Team All-OVC
Jamari Brown	Gardner-Webb	Gr.	2022 1 <sup>st</sup> Team All-Big South
Nick Coates	Eastern Illinois	Jr.	2022 2 <sup>nd</sup> Team All-OVC
Russell Dandy	Eastern Illinois	5 <sup>th</sup>	2021 OVC All-Newcomer Team
Josh Green	Tennessee State	Sr.	2019 Freshman All-American, OVC All-Newcomer
Jamel Johnson	Charleston Southern	So.	2022 2 <sup>nd</sup> Team All-Big South, Freshman All-America
Lawrence Johnson	Southeast Missouri	Gr.	2022 1 <sup>st</sup> Team All-OVC; All-America
Ty Leonard	Southeast Missouri	Sr.	2022 2 <sup>nd</sup> Team All-OVC
Raequan Ousley	Gardner-Webb	Sr.	2022 1 <sup>st</sup> Team All-Big South
Bryce Phillips	Tennessee State	So.	2022 2 <sup>nd</sup> Team All-OVC
AJ Thomas	Gardner-Webb	Gr.	2-time All-Big South

#### PLACEKICKER (4)

NAME	SCHOOL	YR	NOTES
Stone Galloway	Eastern Illinois	Sr.	2022 1 <sup>st</sup> Team All-OVC
Ethan Gettman	Bryant	Sr.	2022 1 <sup>st</sup> Team All-Big South; All-America, Mitchell Award
Ian Saulter	Gardner-Webb	Gr.	2022 2 <sup>nd</sup> Team All-Mid South Conference
Logan Seibert	Lindenwood	Jr.	2022 2 <sup>nd</sup> Team All-OVC

#### PUNTERS (2)

NAME	SCHOOL	YR	NOTES
Nick Bigelow	Tennessee Tech	Jr.	39.5 AVG, 21 FC, 14 I20, 3 50+
George Sounders III	Robert Morris	Gr.	38.7 AVG, 38 FC, 22 I20, 7 50+

#### KICKOFF RETURN/PUNT RETURN SPECIALISTS (4)

NAME	SCHOOL	YR	HONORS
Mark Aitken	Eastern Illinois	Jr.	2022 2 <sup>nd</sup> Team All-OVC
Anthony Frederick	Bryant	Sr.	2022 Big South Special Teams Player of the Year
Dalyn McDonald	Southeast Missouri	Sr.	2022 1 <sup>st</sup> Team All-OVC
Cooper Willman	Eastern Illinois	Jr.	2022 2 <sup>nd</sup> Team All-OVC

#### LONG SNAPPER (2)

NAME	SCHOOL	YR	HONORS
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Jack Valente	Eastern Illinois	Jr.	2022 2 <sup>nd</sup> Team All-OVC
Jamie Wilson	Gardner-Webb	R-So.	2022 2 <sup>nd</sup> Team All-Big South; Freshman All-America

### **ABOUT THE BIG SOUTH-OHIO VALLEY CONFERENCE ASSOCIATION**

In February 2022, the Big South Conference and Ohio Valley Conference announced the creation of an association of their football member institutions, to begin with the 2023 NCAA Division I football season and have an initial term of at least four years. The unique agreement combines the two conferences' football membership to ensure NCAA championship access and stability for the multisport conferences. In creating the association, presidents from each of the multisport conferences pointed to the similarities of the OVC and the Big South, with their complementary geographies and intercollegiate athletic philosophies, as key to making this association possible.

Schools in the association are Bryant University (Smithfield, RI), Charleston Southern University (Charleston, SC), Eastern Illinois University (Charleston, IL), Gardner-Webb University (Boiling Springs, NC), Lindenwood University (St. Charles, MO), Robert Morris University (Moon Township, PA), Southeast Missouri State University (Cape Girardeau, MO), Tennessee State University (Nashville, TN), Tennessee Technological University (Cookeville, TN) and University of Tennessee at Martin (Martin, TN). Western Illinois University (Macomb, IL) will join the Association beginning with the 2024 season. For more information on the Association, visit [www.BigSouthOVCFootball.com](http://www.BigSouthOVCFootball.com).

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