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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL

OCTOBER 13, 2026 | 7:00 PM

BURGESS SNOW FIELD AT AMFIRST STADIUM

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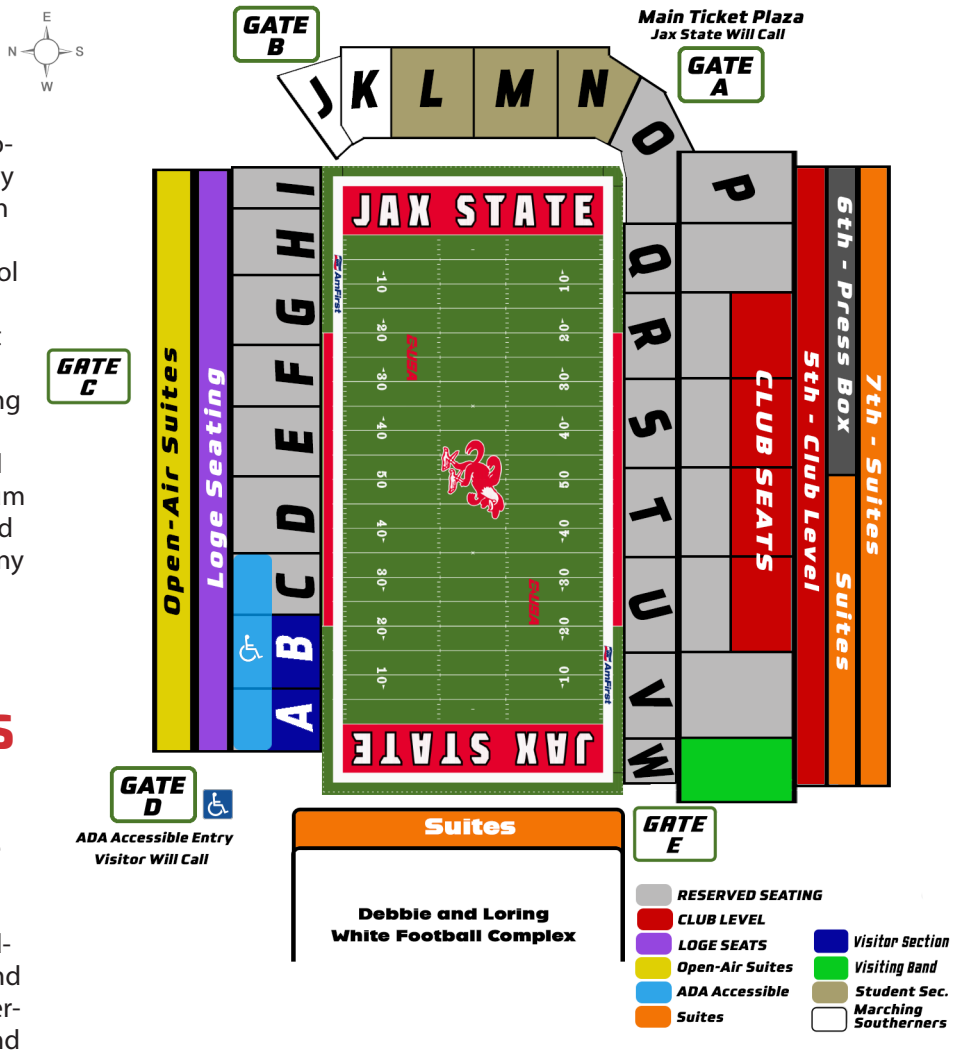
Jacksonville State University promotes good sportsmanship by student-athletes, coaches and spectators. Fans will conduct themselves with good sportsmanship to reflect the high standards of honor and dignity that characterize Jacksonville State University. Anyone associated with an athletic program or event should reflect respect, fairness, civility, responsibility, and courtesy to others. Profanity, vulgar cheers, intimidating actions, intoxication, belligerent or abusive behaviors will not be tolerated. Fans attending Jax State football games are expected to stay off the playing field, including after the game, and will not throw objects onto the field.

Positive support of the players, coaches and officials is strongly encouraged. Jacksonville State University expects positive behavior exhibited towards our visiting guests at every contest. Please treat others with courtesy and respect. Any violation of this Code of Conduct subjects you to removal from the stadium and forfeit of future event tickets.

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AmFirst Stadium guests are encouraged to drink responsibly. Guests must be 21 years of age or older to purchase and consume alcohol. Proper identification is necessary to buy any alcoholic beverages. Each guest is limited to two (2) alcoholic beverages per transaction. All alcohol sales will conclude at the end of the third quarter. Stadium Management reserves the right to discontinue sales at any time. Guests cannot bring alcohol into or out of Burgess-Snow Field at AmFirst Stadium. Guests will not be permitted to enter the stadium if they appear intoxicated. Drunk and disorderly behavior or violation of any alcohol policy will result in ejection from the stadium without a refund.



PROHIBITED ITEMS

Jacksonville State University is a weapons-free campus. No firearms or other dangerous weapons will be allowed inside AmFirst Stadium. In addition, umbrellas, backpacks, seat cushions with attached arms, recording devices, artificial noisemakers and amplified sound systems, food/beverage containers, bottles, weapons, and alcoholic beverages are not allowed inside AmFirst Stadium. Event staff and security personnel will conduct bag searches at each gate before entry.

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JAX STATE CUSA

COACH CHARLES KELLY

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Jax State vs. FIU

Oct. 13, 2026 - Burgess-Snow Field at AmFirst Stadium

JACKSONVILLE STATE

Location: Jacksonville, Ala.
Population: 12,548
Founded: 1883
Enrollment: 10,433
Affiliation: NCAA Div. I
Conference: Conference USA
Colors: Red & White
Nickname: Gamecocks
President: Dr. Don C. Killingsworth Jr.
Athletic Director: Greg Seitz
Website: JaxStateSports.com



CHARLES KELLY

Career: 13-7 (2nd) | AT Jax State: 13-7 (2nd)

Kelly was announced as the 30th head football coach in program history on December 21, 2024. The Ozark, Alabama, native, brought nearly 35 years of coaching experience with him to the Gamecocks, including five seasons at Jax State under Hall of Fame coach Bill Burgess.

Kelly spent time at some of the top programs in college football, including Alabama, Florida State, Auburn, Tennessee, and Georgia Tech. He has been part of two national championship teams and won numerous conference titles.

Immediately prior to returning to Jax State, Kelly served as the co-defensive coordinator and safeties coach at Auburn in 2024 and the defensive coordinator at Colorado in 2023. In recognition of his recruiting prowess, Kelly was named the 2023 247Sports National Recruiter of the Year.

In his debut season as a collegiate head coach, Kelly led Jax State to a 9-5 record with wins over Liberty, WKU and Kennesaw State during the regular season. The Gamecocks made a second-straight appearance in the CUSA championship game and earned a third consecutive bowl bid, where the Gamecocks "Whupped" rival Troy, 17-13, in the IS4S Salute to Veterans Bowl in Montgomery's Cramton Bowl.

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL

Location: Miami, Fla.
Population: 489,800
Founded: 1972
Enrollment: 56,000
Affiliation: NCAA Div. I
Conference: Conference USA
Colors: Blue and Gold
Nickname: Panthers
President: Jeanette M. Nunez
Athletic Director: Scott Carr
Website: FIUSports.com



WILLIE SIMMONS

Career: 76-32 (10th) | AT FIU: 10-8 (2nd)

Willie Simmons was named as the seventh head coach in the history of the FIU Football Program on Dec. 7, 2024.

In year one under Simmons, FIU produced one of its best seasons in program history with several historic feats, including the program's first bowl game appearance since 2019, first victory over rival-Fla. Atlantic since 2016 and first overall winning record since 2018. With Simmons at the helm, the Panthers ripped off a four-game winning streak to close out the regular season with a 7-5 overall record and 5-3 mark in Conference USA play.

Simmons, spent the 2024 season as an assistant coach overseeing the running backs at Duke, helping guide the ACC member to a 9-3 record. Prior to that, the Florida native transformed the Florida A&M program, serving six years (2018-23) as head coach of the Rattlers, compiling a 45-13 (.776) overall record and a 34-5 (.872) mark in Southwestern Athletic Conference (SWAC) and Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC) play.

Additionally, Simmons led the Rattlers to two HBCU National Championships in 2019 and 2023.

FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT



Welcome to Burgess-Snow Field at AmFirst Stadium, home of the Jax State Gamecocks!

It is great to have you with us on the Friendliest Campus in the South as we begin another season of Gamecock Football.

The 2025 season gave us plenty to celebrate. In Coach Charles Kelly's first year leading his alma mater, the Gamecocks won nine games, returned to the Conference USA Championship Game and capped the season with a victory over in-state rival Troy in the Salute to Veterans Bowl. It was our third consecutive bowl appearance since making the transition to the Football Bowl Subdivision and another important step forward for our program.

Our fans were a big part of that success. Last November, a record crowd of 24,166 packed AmFirst Stadium for our win over Kennesaw State, creating an atmosphere that showcased the passion of Gamecock Nation. As we enter our fourth season in Conference USA, we look forward to building on that momentum and once again competing for championships.

Those who have been part of Jax State for many years know just how far this program has come. Today, our student-athletes train and prepare in the Loring and Debbie White Football Performance Center, while AmFirst Stadium continues to provide one of the best college football environments in the region. But while the facilities and level of competition have changed, the pride and tradition surrounding Gamecock Football remain as strong as ever.

And no Jax State game day would be complete without the Marching Southerners. Our world-renowned band has represented Jacksonville State with excellence for generations, and this season carries even more excitement as the Southerners prepare to represent Jax State on one of the world's biggest stages — the 138th Rose Parade in Pasadena, California, on New Year's Day 2027. We are incredibly proud of these students and look forward to sharing the Southerners with millions of people around the world.

Thank you for joining us today and for being part of the Gamecock game day experience. Whether you have been coming to Burgess-Snow Field for decades or this is your first visit, we hope you enjoy your time at Jax State and experience what makes the Friendliest Campus in the South such a special place.

Go Gamecocks and Blow Southerners!

Don C. Killingsworth, Jr., Ed.D.
President
Jacksonville State University



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#	Rushing	GP	ATT	GAIN	LOSS	NET	AVG	TD	LG	AVG/G
12	Creel, Caden	6	86	441	36	405	4.7	4	48	67.50
6	Likely, Jalen	5	40	211	10	201	5.0	2	45	40.20
22	Farrington, Lucas	5	28	174	9	165	5.9	1	26	33.00
7	Lando, Khristian	6	19	65	3	62	3.3	1	14	10.33
32	Kouemi, Cedric	6	16	69	12	57	3.6	0	14	9.50
17	Williams, Jamill	6	5	20	4	16	3.2	0	7	2.67
	Team	6	8	0	28	-28	-3.5	0	0	-4.67
	Total	**6**	**202**	**980**	**102**	**878**	**4.3**	**8**	**48**	**146.33**
	Opponents	**6**	**227**	**1090**	**119**	**971**	**4.3**	**7**	**72**	**161.83**

#	Passing	GP	Rating	COMP-ATT-INT	PCT	YDS	TD	LG	AVG/G
12	Creel, Caden	6	150.31	113-170-5	66.47%	1423	10	82	237.17
15	Moran, Jack	1	205.00	2-2-0	100.00%	25	0	18	25.00
17	Williams, Jamill	6	217.60	1-1-0	100.00%	14	0	14	2.33
41	Lewis, Carter	3	158.80	1-1-0	100.00%	7	0	7	2.33
	Total	**6**	**151.38**	**117-174-5**	**67.24%**	**1469**	**10**	**82**	**244.83**
	Opponents	**6**	**127.06**	**105-158-6**	**66.46%**	**1047**	**6**	**70**	**174.50**

#	Receiving	GP	NO	YDS	AVG	TD	LG	AVG/G
11	Johnson, Deondre	6	18	338	18.78	2	42	56.33
17	Williams, Jamill	6	21	246	11.71	5	55	41.00
30	Gilbert, Luke	6	10	231	23.10	2	82	38.50
3	Cannon, Darius	6	20	165	8.25	0	38	27.50
9	Johnson, Ronnel	6	13	142	10.92	0	18	23.67
22	Farrington, Lucas	5	7	78	11.14	0	23	15.60
6	Likely, Jalen	5	8	61	7.63	1	18	12.20
5	Gentry, Dylan	5	5	54	10.80	0	15	10.80
	Alpers, David	6	3	40	13.33	0	25	6.67
44	Scissum, Jameson	5	5	34	6.80	0	8	6.80
7	Lando, Khristian	6	2	22	11.00	0	16	3.67

#	Punt Returns	NO	YRDS	AVG	TD
1	Nix, Caleb	6	127	21.17	1
3	Cannon, Darius	1	6	6.00	0
	Total	**7**	**133**	**19.00**	**1**
	Opponents	**3**	**9**	**3.00**	**0**

#	Interceptions	NO	YRDS	AVG	TD
1	Nix, Caleb	2	57	28.50	1
24	Sims, Ty	1	8	8.00	0
	Billings, Rob	1	5	5.00	0
9	Carr, Jonavan	1	0	0.00	0
31	Lyles, Tristan	1	0	0.00	0
	Total	**6**	**70**	**11.67**	**1**
	Opponents	**5**	**60**	**12.00**	**0**

#	Kick Returns	NO	YRDS	AVG	TD
17	Williams, Jamill	4	73	18.25	0
	Total	**4**	**73**	**18.25**	**0**
	Opponents	**12**	**344**	**28.67**	**1**

#	Fumble Returns	NO	YRDS	AVG	TD

No data to report.

			Tackles				Sacks	Pass Defense			Fumbles	
#	Defensive Leaders	GP	Solo	ASST	TOT	TFL-YDS	NO-YDS	INT-YDS	BU	QBH	RCV-YDS	FF
1	Nix, Caleb	6	19	16	35.0	1.0-1	—	2-57	3	1	—	—
40	O'Steen, Walker	5	13	17	30.0	1.0-4	—	—	2	1	—	—
9	Carr, Jonavan	6	17	8	25.0	1.5-3	—	1-0	2	—	—	1
2	Joseph, Morven	6	12	12	24.0	1.0-2	—	—	—	—	—	—
3	Fegans, Tre'Quon	6	14	9	23.0	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
8	Brooks, JQ	6	13	8	21.0	—	—	—	2	—	—	—
0	Butler, Myles	6	8	12	20.0	0.5-2	0.5-2	—	—	3	—	—
5	Billings, Rob	5	13	6	19.0	1.0-1	—	1-5	1	—	—	—
93	Campbell, Jawaun	6	7	12	19.0	2.0-6	1.0-5	—	1	—	—	—
13	Cruz, Jacob	6	11	8	19.0	2.0-3	1.0-2	—	—	—	—	—
16	Hood, Quay	6	12	6	18.0	3.0-23	2.0-19	—	—	—	—	—
44	Perry, Khurtiss	6	6	11	17.0	3.0-9	1.0-4	—	1	—	—	—
15	Floyd, Tae	5	6	7	13.0	4.0-15	2.0-11	—	—	—	—	—
92	Hood, Marquis	6	7	6	13.0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
7	Woods, Marc	6	7	5	12.0	1.0-9	—	—	1	—	—	—
34	McCollough, Jameson	6	7	4	11.0	1.0-1	—	—	—	—	—	—
35	Thompson, Aidan	6	5	6	11.0	1.5-5	0.5-1	—	—	2	—	—
6	Cook, Kaden	6	5	4	9.0	0.5-2	0.5-2	—	—	1	—	—
53	Mitchell, Ian	6	4	5	9.0	1.0-12	1.0-12	—	—	1	—	1
45	Rosa, Mikey	6	4	5	9.0	3.5-9	1.0-7	—	—	—	—	—
36	Matthews, Brayden	5	6	1	7.0	1.0-3	—	—	—	—	—	—
28	Johnson, Christopher	6	3	3	6.0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
12	Core, Brennan	5	2	3	5.0	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
99	Rumph, Andrew	6	1	4	5.0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
31	Lyles, Tristan	4	2	2	4.0	0.5-1	—	1-0	—	—	—	—
96	Addy, Nii	3	2	1	3.0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
22	Jenkins, Jaheim	6	2	1	3.0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
14	Toombs, Angel	6	2	1	3.0	1.5-3	0.5-2	—	—	—	—	—



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Liberty	2-0	1.000	1-0	1-0	65-17	5-1	.833
Jax State	2-0	1.000	1-0	1-0	50-39	4-2	.667
FIU	1-0	1.000	1-0	0-0	22-3	3-2	.600
NM State	1-1	.500	1-0	0-1	37-35	2-4	.333
WKU	1-1	.500	1-0	0-1	47-47	2-4	.333
Delaware	0-1	.000	0-1	0-0	14-30	2-3	.400
MTSU	0-1	.000	0-0	0-1	13-23	2-3	.400
Kennesaw State	0-1	.000	0-1	0-0	26-27	1-4	.200
Missouri State	0-1	.000	0-0	0-1	13-34	1-4	.200
Sam Houston	0-1	.000	0-0	0-1	3-35	1-4	.200

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

Sam Houston at Texas Tech (TNT)	11 a.m.
New Mexico at NM State (CBSSN)	2:30 p.m.
Delaware at Virginia (ACC Network)	5 p.m.
Long Island at FIU (ESPN+)	5 p.m.
MTSU at Jax State (ESPN+)	**6 p.m.**
Kennesaw State at Arkansas State	6 p.m.
Mercyhurst at WKU	6 p.m.
Missouri State at SMU (ACC Network)	8 p.m.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1

WKU at NM State (CBSSN)	**7 p.m.**

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2

Liberty at Delaware (CBSSN)	**6 p.m.**

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3

MTSU at Kansas (ESPNU)	11 a.m.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7

Jax State at Kennesaw State	**6 p.m.**
NM State at FIU	**6:30 p.m.**

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8

Sam Houston at Liberty	**6 p.m.**
Missouri State at WKU	**6 p.m.**

Conference games in bold.
All times are listed in CT

WEEKLY AWARDS

OFFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE WEEK
Sean Wilson, Delaware – Jr. – WR – Alpharetta, Ga.
Wilson enjoyed an explosive day in Delaware's (2-1) 22-14 win over Coastal Carolina on Saturday. The receiver tied his career high of nine catches and two touchdowns, while setting a new career best of 185 receiving yards. Wilson's first touchdown catch, which came on a trick-play flea flicker, was featured on NFL Sunday Countdown's 'You Got Mossed' segment after he jumped over a pair of defenders while getting interfered with to corral the score. Wilson's second score was nearly as impressive, rising up once again to bring down another highly contested catch to put the game out of reach with 8:19 remaining in the final quarter. The performance marked his fourth-career 100+ yard performance, second 150+ yard outing and third multi-touchdown game.

DEFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE WEEK
Jackson Lowe, MTSU – Jr. – DB – Brentwood, Tenn.
Lowe was responsible for two of the most pivotal plays, as the Blue Raiders (2-1) triumphed 27-20 over Nevada in a back-and-forth affair. On the first play from scrimmage in the second half, he hopped on his own forced fumble following a strip sack of Carter Jones that led to a go-ahead touchdown pass four plays later. Then, with the Wolf Pack driving to try and tie the game up, Lowe stuffed Dominic Kelley at the line of scrimmage on 4th-and-2 to force a turnover on downs and allow MTSU to run out the clock. Lowe finished the game with six total tackles, including three solo stops to go with the key strip sack.

SPECIAL TEAMS PLAYER OF THE WEEK
Caleb Nix, Jax State – Gr. – S – Phenix City, Ala.
Nix returned a punt 75 yards for a touchdown to give Jax State (2-2) their first and only lead of the night at 31-27 with 8:16 to go in the fourth quarter after trailing 17-0. It was the first punt return for a touchdown by a Gamecock since 2016. On defense, he added six tackles with one for loss and broke up two passes.

FRESHMAN OF THE WEEK
Tristan Lyles, Jax State – Fr. – LB – Phenix City, Ala.
Lyles recorded his first career interception to ice the game with 1:52 left in the fourth quarter as Georgia Southern was driving for a potential game-winning score at the Jax State 13-yard line. The freshman also helped out on a tackle for loss and made two other tackles on the night.

OFFENSIVE LINEMAN OF THE WEEK
Reese Tripp, MTSU – Sr. – RT – Mantorville, Minn.
Tripp led the way up front for the Blue Raiders in their home win over Nevada, logging all 71 snaps at right tackle. He had the line's top PFF offensive grade (69.6) and run-block grade (66.2), while allowing just one pressure on 34 dropbacks to help secure MTSU's first 2-0 home start since 2021. Tripp was also instrumental in running back Antonio Martin topping the 100-yard rushing mark as the offense went turnover free once again.

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Anniston: 97.9 FM WVOK
Arab: 107.1 FM / 1380 AM WRAB
Attalla: 102.9 FM WKXX
Chelsea: Kool 96.9 FM WLXY
Gadsden: 102.9 FM WKXX
Helena/Hoover: 93.3 FM The River
Hwy 280/Inverness: Kool 96.9 FM WLXY
Montgomery: Praise 96.5 FM / 800 AM
Oxford: 97.9 FM WVOK
Pelham: 93.3 FM The River



JAX STATE



HEAD COACH CHARLES KELLY

SECOND SEASON

Jacksonville State Vice President for Athletics Greg Seitz announced the hiring of Charles Kelly as the 30th head football coach in program history on December 21, 2024.

By that date in 2025, Kelly had guided Jax State to a 9-5 season in his opening campaign and won the Salute to Veterans Bowl in Montgomery over historic rival Troy.

Kelly, a native of Ozark, Alabama, brought nearly 35 years of coaching experience to the Gamecocks, including five seasons at Jax State after being hired by Hall of Fame coach Bill Burgess.

Kelly has spent time at some of the top programs in college football, including Alabama, Florida State, Auburn, Tennessee, and Georgia Tech. He has been part of teams that have won two national championships and numerous conference titles.

"First of all, it's an unbelievable honor to have the opportunity to be the head football coach at Jacksonville State University," said Kelly at the time he was hired. "The standard of excellence at this university and in its athletic programs is second to none, and I am proud to return and build on that incredible tradition."

Most recently, Kelly served as the co-defensive coordinator and safeties coach at Auburn, his alma mater. Under his guidance, the Tigers' defense ranked among the SEC leaders in several categories, including scoring defense and rushing defense. Individually, freshmen Demarcus Riddick and Jay Crawford earned spots on the Freshman All-SEC Team.

Before his time at Auburn, Kelly was the defensive coordinator at Colorado in 2023, where he played a pivotal role in helping turn around the Buffaloes program under head coach Deion Sanders. His players included 2024 Heisman Trophy winner Travis Hunter and All-Pac-12 safety Shiloh Sanders.

Kelly also spent four seasons at Alabama with Nick Saban as the associate defensive coordinator and safeties coach. During his tenure, the Crimson Tide achieved a 47-6 record and won the 2020 national championship.

In recognition of his recruiting prowess, Kelly was named the 2023 247Sports National Recruiter of the Year and consistently ranked among the top recruiters in the country.

Kelly's coaching journey also includes stints at Tennessee, Florida State, Georgia Tech, and Nicholls State.

He served as defensive coordinator for four seasons at Florida State, where he helped lead the Seminoles to the first College Football Playoff and mentored several future NFL stars.

Earlier in his career, Kelly held roles at Eufaula High School, Henderson State, and Phenix City High School.

Kelly earned his first victory as a collegiate head coach on Sept. 6, 2025 in his Jax State home debut against CUSA rival Liberty. Behind the nation's leading rusher in Cam Cook and one of the best defenses in CUSA, the Gamecocks finished the regular season undefeated at home with wins over Delaware, Kennesaw State and Western Kentucky. Jax State completed Kelly's first year with the second FBS bowl win in program history, defeating Troy in the first matchup in a quarter-century between the two longtime rivals.





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TAYLOR HOUSEWRIGHT

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR / QUARTERBACKS

2nd Season

Taylor Housewright joined the Jax State staff before the 2025 season as the tight ends coach and was promoted to Offensive Coordinator and Quarterbacks Coach following the season.

During his first season with the Gamecocks, tight end Pearson Baldwin was the team's third-leading receiver with 26 catches for 302 yards and two touchdowns.

Housewright spent 2024 at Georgia Southern, serving as a senior analyst. He spent the prior three seasons as the offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach at FCS powerhouse Montana State, finishing second nationally in scoring and rushing during the 2022 season. MSU played for the FCS championship during the 2021 season.

He also got the chance to begin the development of quarterback Tommy Mellott, the 2024 Walter Payton Award winner and FCS ADA Offensive Player of the Year. Mellott passed for 1,698 yards and 10 touchdowns and rushed for 1,071 yards and 13 scores splitting time at quarterback with Sean Chambers, a two-time All-American, during the 2022 season.

Housewright spent time at Oregon as an analyst for Joe Moorhead and also worked with Moorhead as a quality control coach at Mississippi State in 2019.

The former Ashland quarterback finished fifth in the Harlon Hill balloting in 2012.



BRIAN WILLIAMS

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR / SAFTIES

2nd Season

Brian Williams was hired as the program's defensive coordinator in February 2025.

During his first season in Jacksonville, Williams engineered a Jax State defense that led Conference USA in fumble recoveries which helped the Gamecocks lead the league in turnover margin. Jax State also had the No. 3 rushing defense ,No. 3 red zone defense, and No. 3 scoring defense in the league.

Williams spent the previous three seasons as the defensive coordinator at Maryland and worked with the Terrapins' defensive line since 2020 and was the outside linebackers coach during the 2019 season.

During the 2023 season, Williams' defense posted its best points allowed per game average since 2010. He's coached six All-Big Ten selections during his time at Maryland. In 2021, Williams was honored by 247Sports as the top recruiter in the Big Ten during that cycle, helping Maryland land the No. 18 class nationally.

Williams spent three seasons at UAB as the linebackers coach, helping the Blazers reach the Conference USA Championship game and an 11-win season.

The Miami native got his start in coaching as a defensive analyst at Florida State in 2013, helping the Seminole defense that led the ACC in pass defense, ranked second in total defense, and third in rushing defense.



MAX THURMOND

SPECIAL TEAMS COORDINATOR / RUNNING BACKS

2nd Season

A familiar face to Gamecock fans, Max Thurmond returned to the sidelines in 2025 for his third stint with the Red and White.

In his first season back at AmFirst Stadium, Thurmond coached a pair of First-Team All-Conference USA selections. Running back Cam Cook was named the Conference USA Player of the Year and the Michael L. Slive Conference USA Male Athlete of the Year after leading the nation in rushing with 1,659 and 16 touchdowns. On special teams, Garrison Rippa earned all-league honors after connecting on 21 field goals which included four of 50+ yards.

Thurmond most recently served as the senior offensive analyst at Tennessee from 2022-2024. With the Volunteers, he helped Tennessee to it best run of the 21st century with two bowl wins, including the 2023 Orange Bowl, and the program's first CFP playoff berth in 2024.

A former Gamecock himself, Thurmond started his coaching career at his alma mater as a graduate assistant under Jack Crowe and later served as an assistant from 2001-2012.

He began his coaching career on defense, where he spent seven years with the outside linebackers and two years coaching cornerbacks, and helped establish the Gamecocks as one of the most dominating defenses in the Ohio Valley Conference.

The Gamecocks won three OVC titles and advanced to the FCS Playoffs in 2003, 2004 and 2010.

Thurmond spent a single season at Reinhardt University in 2013 before a two-year stint at West Alabama for 2014-15 where he oversaw linebackers and special teams and coached eventual Super Bowl champion, Tyreek Hill.

In the stop before his first return to Jax State, Thurmond served as special teams coordinator and linebackers coach for Will Healy at Charlotte in 2019.

In his season with the 49ers, UNCC set school records for wins (7), Conference USA wins (5), and winning streak (5) and advanced to the program's first bowl game.

Thurmond was previously the linebackers coach and special teams coordinator for Healy at Austin Peay for 2016-17. He inherited a team that went 0-11 the season prior. After a winless 2016 season, Thurmond helped the Govs snap their 29-game losing streak – the longest losing streak in NCAA football at the time – and finish an outstanding 8-4 in just his second season.

After serving as the special teams coordinator and linebackers coach at Charlotte, Thurmond returned to Jacksonville to coach special teams and linebackers under John Grass.

The return was a successful one as his outside linebackers unit helped lead a Gamecock defense that was one of the top run defenses in the nation and in Gamecock history. All-American and First Team All-OVC selection DJ Coleman, Freshman All-American J-Rock Swain and All-OVC performer Umstead Sanders paced a defense that held a school-record nine-straight opponents under 100 yards rushing.

In Thurmond's first season taking over the Jax State special teams in the 2020-21 season, the Gamecocks enjoyed one of the OVC's greatest turnarounds in that phase of the game. Freshman Michael Pettway was a First Team All-OVC selection as a kickoff returner, while freshman kicker Alen Karajic led the league in touchbacks, while also ranking third in the OVC in scoring among kickers.

Thurmond picked up another OVC championship in 2020, and later served as interim head coach for two games at the end of the 2021 season.

Thurmond holds a degree in Exercise Science. A native of Sylvester, Ga. where he attended Worth County High, Thurmond and his wife, Gresha have two children: Maxwell Jr. and Asha.



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BERT BIFFANI

OUTSIDE LINEBACKERS / RECRUITING COORDINATOR

2nd Season

Bert Biffani was hired as the outside linebackers coach and recruiting coordinator before the 2025 season.

In 2025, his position group was led by Isaac Walker's 5.5 tackles for loss and three sacks. Additionally, his recruiting efforts helped the Gamecocks land the top recruiting class in Conference USA for the Class of 2026 and a group that 247Sports ranked 84th nationally.

Biffani previously worked with Kelly during his time at Alabama, Tennessee, and Florida State where Biffani served as an analyst. He was part of the 2013 Florida State staff that was the 2013 BCS National Champion and the 2020 Alabama staff that won the 2020 College Football Playoff championship.

Biffani has also been part of three SEC championship teams and a pair of ACC championship teams.

He spent the 2019 season as a graduate assistant working with quarterbacks at Texas A&M. During his career, Biffani has been to 12 bowl games, and has coached 12 NFL Draft picks including a pair of first round selections in Brian Burns and Terrion Arnold.

In 2024, Biffani was the defensive coordinator at Pell City High School, helping the team advance to the AHSAA playoffs.



DESHAUN DAVIS

LINEBACKERS

2nd Season

Deshaun Davis was hired as the Gamecocks' linebackers coach before the start of the 2025 season.

During his first season with the Gamecocks, Mac Sanders earned All-Freshman honors from Conference USA after leading the team in tackles with 85 and adding 11.5 for loss. Walker O'Steen was the team's second-leading tackler with 84 and had seven for loss.

Davis spent the previous two seasons coaching linebackers at North Alabama. In 2024, freshman Josh Anglin was named to the Stats Perform FCS All-America team under Davis's tutelage after making 81 tackles with seven for loss. Additionally, Jackson Bratton was second in the United Athletic Conference in tackles for loss.

Prior to UNA, Davis was a graduate assistant at UCF.

As a player, the Prichard native was a First-Team All-SEC linebacker at Auburn in 2018 and earned an invitation to the Reese's Senior Bowl and was a quarterfinalist for the Lott Impact Trophy.

Davis was drafted in the sixth round of the 2019 NFL Draft by the Cincinnati Bengals and also spent time with the Jacksonville Jaguars and Philadelphia Eagles as well as the Saskatchewan Roughriders of the Canadian Football League.



LAWRENCE DAWSEY

WIDE RECEIVERS

2nd Season

Lawrence Dawsey was hired as the wide receivers coach before the 2025 season.

In his first season with the Gamecocks, Dawsey mentored Deondre Johnson who led Jax State with 724 yards and six touchdowns on 30 catches and earned honorable mention All-Conference USA honors. Brock Rechsteiner had a career-high 36 catches for 383 yards and five touchdowns during the 2025 season.

The Dothan native came back to Alabama after spending three seasons at Appalachian State as the wide receivers coach, which included a Sun Belt East Division title in 2023. In 2024, the Mountaineers had two All-Sun Belt receivers.

Prior to working as an analyst at Texas A&M for two seasons, Dawsey was on staff at Florida State for 10 years working with receivers and was elevated to co-offensive coordinator by the end of his tenure. This included working as the pass game coordinator and receivers coach during the Seminoles' 2013 national championship season.

Three times, Dawsey has been recognized as one of the top 10 recruiters in the ACC by Rivals and was the 2011 ACC Recruiter of the Year by SI.com.

Dawsey's coaching career started at the high school level in Tampa before joining Nick Saban's LSU staff as a graduate assistant during the 2003 national championship season before spending the next three seasons at USF as receivers coach.

He was drafted in the third round of the 1991 NFL Draft by the Tampa Bay Buccaneers after an All-American career at Florida State. Dawsey was the United Press International's NFC Rookie of the Year in 1991 when he recorded 818 yards on 55 catches.



SAM MIX

TIGHT ENDS

1st Season

Sam Mix was hired as the program's tight ends coach in January of 2026.

Mix spent the previous five seasons at FCS powerhouse Montana State. He helped the Bobcats reach the last two FCS national championship games, where just last season MSU claimed their first national title in 42 years. He spent last season coaching receivers under head coach Brent Vigen after coaching running backs the prior two seasons.

That also included working with new Jax State offensive coordinator Taylor Housewright during the 2022 season when Montana State finished second nationally in scoring and rushing.

MSU junior receiver Taco Dowler earned Second-Team All-Big Sky honors after making 77 catches for 1,025 yards and seven touchdowns under his leadership. Running back Scottre Humphrey earned Stats Perform Third-Team All-America honors in 2024 and Adam Jones earned Stats Perform FCS Freshman All-America honors.

Mix also worked in recruiting and operations along with serving as an offensive analyst for two seasons at Montana State. His first coaching position was with his alma mater of Montana State-Northern as receivers coach and special teams coordinator from 2019-21.



ROHAN GAINES

DEFENSIVE BACKS

2nd Season

Rohan Gaines was hired by Coach Kelly as the new defensive backs coach before the 2025 season.

Jax State finished third in Conference USA in scoring defense during his first season with the team. Tre'Quon Fegans allowed the lowest catch percentage among CUSA corners in 2025 according to Pro Football Focus at 35.9%.

The Georgia native previously spent time on the coaching staffs at Auburn and Texas A&M, spending the 2024 season as a defensive analyst at Auburn, working with the cornerbacks.

In 2023, he was a defensive graduate assistant on Jimbo Fisher's staff at Texas A&M. His coaching career started at his high school alma mater of Bainbridge in Georgia, helping the Bearcats win their first state title in nearly 30 years during his first season on staff.

Gaines was a four-year starter in the secondary at Arkansas, earning FoxSportsNext Freshman All-American honors and SEC All-Freshman honors in 2012. During the 2014 season, he had an interception against eighth-ranked Ole Miss which he returned 100 yards for a touchdown during a 30-0 win.

He started all 13 games as a senior and finished third on the team in tackles.



XAVIER GARCIA

DEFENSIVE LINE

2nd Season

The Gamecocks defensive line produced a pair of All-Conference USA players in Emmanuel Oyebadejo (first-team) and Talan Carter (second-team) during Garcia's first season at Jax State. The unit totaled 31.5 tackles for loss and 13.5 sacks during the season, and helped the Gamecocks finish among the league's top run stopping defenses and earn a trip to the Conference USA Championship and a win in the IS4S Salute to Veterans Bowl during a nine-win season.

Garcia spent the 2024 season at Georgia Tech as a defensive assistant working with the defensive line. The Yellow Jackets racked up 18 sacks in 13 games and made an appearance in the Birmingham Bowl.

Tackle Jordan van den Berg was an All-ACC Second Team selection and Zeek Biggers earned honorable mention all-conference honors.

Garcia spent the previous season at Duke, helping the Blue Devils lead the ACC in scoring defense at 19 points per game which was 16th-best nationally.

He also spent time at SMU, Temple, Central Oklahoma, and Angelo State as a graduate assistant. Garcia started his coaching career at New Mexico Military Institute, where he also was a two-time all-conference selection before finishing his career at Eastern Kentucky where he started 10 games his senior year.



ADAM ROSS

OFFENSIVE LINE

1st Season

Adam Ross was hired as the Jax State offensive line coach in January of 2026.

Ross, who spent the last two seasons at Murray State as assistant head coach/co-offensive coordinator and offensive line coach, takes over as the new offensive line coach.

Ross graduated from Jax State in 2002 and spent 11 seasons on staff, working his way up from a student assistant to offensive line coach in 2011 under Jack Crowe winning three Ohio Valley Conference championships. A total of 11 offensive linemen earned All-OVC honors during that time with four earning All-America honors.

He spent two seasons as West Alabama's offensive line coach, highlighted by leading the Gulf South in rushing in 2014 with nearly 230 yards per game and were among the national leaders in fewest sacks allowed.

In 2016, he coached at Chattanooga, mentoring All-Americans Corey Levin and Jacob Revis. Prior to Murray State, Ross was offensive line coach, run game coordinator, and co-offensive coordinator at Richmond where he coached All-American Ryan Coll.

As a player, Ross was a two-time Academic All-Southland selection. During his senior season, Jax State led the Southland in rushing and were ninth nationally.



QUINCY KAHLERT

SAFETIES

1st Season

Quincy Kahlert joined the Jax State coaching staff ahead of the 2025 season after spending four seasons at his alma mater, the University of Maryland.

In his first season in Jacksonville, Kahlert saw Caleb Nix earn First-Team All-Conference USA honors after recording four interceptions.

During his time with the Terps, the team played in three bowl games in four years. Kahlert spent the 2021 season as a defensive assistant before being promoted to defensive graduate assistant for two season, helping the team make trips to the Dukes Mayo Bowl and the Music City Bowl.

In 2024, he was a defensive analyst, working closely with defensive coordinator Brian Williams.

Seven defensive players were taken in the NFL Draft over the four years he worked at Maryland.

The Baltimore native has a bachelors in Aerospace Engineering from Maryland and a masters in Public Safety and Leadership from Maryland.

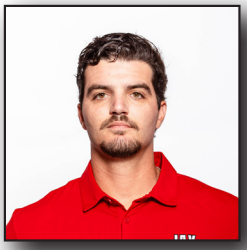
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GEM OF THE HILLS

In 2026, the Marching Southerners celebrate 70 years of sharing excellence and tradition with audiences across the country and around the world. It's an institution that has truly stood the test of time… and is still going strong. Like a faithful friend, it doesn't fade away. It never leaves. It lasts.

A family like this doesn't happen by accident. Year after year, generation to generation, it's cared for with the love of those who call it their own. A love born and bred deep in the tranquil foothills of the Appalachian Mountains… the Gem of the Hills.

In this spirit, the 2026 Marching Southerners honor the people, the land, the culture, and the music of the place they call home. Seasons come and go, but the soul of the Southerners remains the same: forged in the fires of love, honor, and pride. With steel in their veins and a song in their hearts, the Marching Southerners are proud to present their 2026 production: Gem of the Hills.

featuring:

"Appalachian Morning" by Paul Winter

"Appalachian Spring" by Aaron Copland

"River Deep, Mountain High" by Céline Dion

"Landslide" by Fleetwood Mac

"Steel in Our Veins" by Hans Zimmer

"Test Drive" by John Powell

This is who we are.

This is where we're from.

This is the soundtrack to our…Gem of the Hills.



The Marching Southerners have been invited to march in the 138th Rose Parade presented by Honda on January 1, 2027 in Pasadena, California. If you would like to donate to help offset some traveling expenses, please scan the QR code below.

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Second Row: Presley Harris, Kennedy Grace Brown, Ke'Asia Williams, Dailyn Wood, Maddie Albertson, Lila Grace Ridgeway, Rayla Patterson, Celia Raynowska, Presli Martin
Third Row: Mack Hughes, Pete Harned



HEAD CHEER COACH: ADAM RHODEN

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Hometown
0	Myles Butler	LB	6-1	220	Sr.	Atlanta, Ga.
1	Caleb Nix	SAF	6-0	202	5th	Phenix City, Ala.
2	Morven Joseph	LB	6-3	215	5th	Lakeland, Fla.
2	Kadyn Mitchell	QB	5-11	205	So.	Dothan, Ala.
3	Darius Cannon	WR	5-9	180	Sr.	Gainesville, Ga.
3	Tre'Quon Fegans	CB	6-1	190	5th	Anniston, Ala.
4	Shane Payton Hodges	TE	6-4	240	Sr.	New Orleans, La.
5	Rob Billings IV	SAF	6-2	205	Sr.	Marietta, Ga.
5	Dylan Gentry	WR	5-9	165	Jr.	Phenix City, Ala.
6	Kaden Cook	SAF	6-0	195	So.	Round Rock, Texas
6	Jalen Likely	RB	5-8	190	Jr.	Brewton, Ala.
7	Khristian Lando	RB	6-1	211	Jr.	Cartersville, Ga.
7	Marc Woods	SAF	6-4	205	Jr.	Madison, Ala.
8	JQ Brooks	CB	6-3	180	So.	Bessemer, Ala.
9	Jonavan Carr	CB	6-0	190	Jr.	Lakeland, Fla.
9	Ronnel Johnson	WR	6-0	180	Sr.	McDonough, Ga.
10	RJ Rainer	CB	6-0	180	So.	Charlotte, N.C.
10	AJ Watkins	WR	6-1	197	So.	Lithonia, Ga. /
11	Deondre Johnson	WR	6-8	215	Sr.	Newburgh, N.Y.
11	Walter Reddick	OLB	6-3	235	So.	Thomasville, Ga.
12	Brennan Core	SAF	6-1	185	Fr.	Phenix City, Ala.
12	Caden Creel	QB	6-0	200	Sr.	Fairhope, Ala.
13	Jacob Cruz	OLB	6-4	230	Sr.	Acworth, Ga.
13	Cade Frier	WR	6-0	185	Fr.	Tallahassee, Fla.
14	Angel Toombs	DL	6-5	260	Sr.	Milwaukee, Wis.
14	Blake Wallace	WR	6-0	190	So.	Boca Raton, Fla.
15	Tae Floyd	DL	6-3	250	Sr.	Ocala, Fla.
15	Jack Moran	QB	6-5	230	So.	Hillsborough, N.J.
16	Quay Hood	DL	6-2	275	So.	Atlanta, Ga.
16	Noah Lee	QB	6-4	205	Fr.	Jacksonville, Ala.
17	Rodarion Jones	CB	6-1	180	Fr.	Albany, Ga.
17	Jamill Williams	WR	6-0	185	5th	Atlanta, Ga.
18	Keiyon Turner	CB	6-1	185	Sr.	Mesa, Ariz.
19	Shondell Harris	SAF	5-10	187	Fr.	Mobile, Ala.
19	Donovan Moorhead	QB	6-5	215	Fr.	Akron, Ohio
20	Tre'Von Pringle	DB	6-0	195	Fr.	Thomasville, Ga.
20	Maurice Winston	RB	5-10	190	Fr.	Wedowee, Ala.
21	Tim Anthony	CB	6-1	180	Fr.	Snellville, Ga.
21	Justus Savage	RB	5-11	205	Jr.	Atlanta, Ga.
22	Lucas Farrington	RB	5-9	195	So.	Atlanta, Ga.
22	Jaheim Jenkins	CB	6-2	190	5th	Bainbridge, Ga.
23	Temarion Foster	WR	5-11	185	So.	Pahokee, Fla.
24	Ty Sims	SAF	5-8	185	Fr.	Gadsden, Ala.
24	Jacob Cornejo	RB	6-0	220	Jr.	Centre, Ala.
25	Vernon Woodward III	SAF	6-2	200	So.	DeLand, Fla.
26	Brice McKenzie	SAF	5-10	192	Jr.	Highland Home, Ala.
27	Riggs Dunn	SAF	6-0	185	Jr.	Trussville, Ala.
28	Christopher Johnson	DL	6-3	290	So.	Montgomery, Ala.
28	Landon Watkins	WR	5-8	175	Fr.	Pisgah, Ala.
29	Javan Allison	CB	6-0	180	Fr.	Miami, Fla.
29	Rollie Pinto	WR	6-0	200	Fr.	Piedmont, Ala.
30	Luke Gilbert	TE	6-3	225	So.	Pisgah, Ala.
30	DJ Vinson	SAF	6-4	195	So.	Montgomery, Ala.
31	Tristan Lyles	OLB	6-1	240	Fr.	Phenix City, Ala.
32	Cedric Kouemi	RB	5-11	210	Fr.	Gaithersburg, Md.
32	Micah McCarroll	CB	5-9	170	Sr.	Pleasant Grove, Ala.
34	Jameson McCollough	LB	6-1	220	Fr.	Austell, Ga.
35	Aidan Thompson	LB	6-2	230	Sr.	Winder, Ga.
36	Brayden Matthews	LB	6-1	210	Fr.	Atlanta, Ga.
37	Cai Mayowa	LB	6-2	220	5th	Hoover, Ala.
37	Garrison Rippa	K	5-10	205	5th	Locust Grove, Ga.
38	Malik Henderson	CB	6-0	185	Fr.	Graceville, Fla.
38	Jamarious Acklin	RB	6-1	200	Fr.	Huntsville, Ala.
39	Keith Christein	SAF	5-10	185	R-Sr.	Hoover, Ala.
39	Bryson Rouillier	WR	5-9	183	Jr.	Gulf Breeze, Fla.
40	Walker O'Steen	LB	6-3	220	5th	White Plains, Ala.
41	Carter Lewis	P	5-9	185	Fr.	Mobile, Ala.
41	Trace Thompson	TE	6-3	245	Sr.	Attalla, Ala.
42	Devin Pettway	LB	6-1	215	Fr.	Mobile, Ala.
43	Austin Bouck	OLB	6-4	225	Fr.	Destin, Fla.
44	Khurtiss Perry	DL	6-3	288	5th	Montgomery, Ala.
44	Jameson Scissum	TE	6-4	230	So.	Attalla, Ala.
45	Dixon Musgrove	LS	6-5	220	Sr.	Cumming, Ga.
45	Mikey Rosa	LB	6-3	240	Sr.	Charleston, S.C.
46	Avion Willis	SAF	6-2	205	Fr.	Wedowee, Ala.
47	Mario Alloway	OLB	6-2	235	Fr.	Fort Walton Beach, Fla.
48	Peyton Consaul	OLB	6-5	235	Fr.	Hilton, N.Y.
49	Jay Stone	SAF	5-10	180	Fr.	Montgomery, Ala.
50	Lucas Mrachkovskiy	OL	6-2	300	Jr.	Odenville, Ala.
50	Shaynadd Whitfield	LB	6-0	200	Fr.	Oxford, Ala.
51	Bo Burkes	OL	6-2	300	5th	Centreville, Ala.
52	Storm Fain	OL	6-3	290	So.	Hoover, Ala.
53	Ian Mitchell	OLB	6-4	245	So.	Pleasant Grove, Ala.
53	Max Shiver	OL	6-4	310	Fr.	Cusseta, Ala.
54	Markevian Blake	OL	6-2	300	So.	Gainestown, Ala.
54	Jackson Bunn	DL	6-2	285	5th	Oxford, Ala.
55	Ryan Walker	OL	6-3	295	Sr.	Alabaster, Ala.
56	Daylan Martin	OL	6-4	315	Jr.	Bay Minette, Ala.
57	Oliver Maldonado	OL	6-4	306	So.	Miami, Fla.
58	Kendarius Blair	OL	6-3	80	Fr.	Birmingham, Ala.
59	Mac Sanders	LB	6-2	225	So.	McDonough, Ga.
60	William Hathcock	OL	6-4	300	Fr.	Perry, Fla.
62	Hadine Diaby	OL	6-3	300	Sr.	Loganville, Ga.
63	Ryland Bragg	OL	6-3	285	Jr.	Pensacola, Fla.
65	Britin Witt	OL	6-3	300	Sr.	Forest, Va.
67	Shaun Martin	OL	6-4	300	Jr.	Mobile, Ala.
70	Jeremiah Orr	OL	6-5	325	5th	Pineland, S.C.
71	Cam Stancil	OL	6-4	300	Sr.	Madison, Miss.
72	Nate Smith	OL	6-5	280	Sr.	Jacksonville, Ala.
73	J.R. Jernigan	OL	6-4	280	So.	Brewton, Ala.
74	Amarii Atchison	OL	6-8	300	Sr.	Douglasville, Ga.
75	Caleb Holmes	OL	6-3	300	Fr.	Fairburn, Ga.
76	JT Howell	OL	6-2	305	Fr.	Savannah, Ga.
77	Vern Faulk	OL	6-3	320	Fr.	Perry, Fla.
78	Will Cooper	OL	6-5	295	Fr.	Fairhope, Ala.
79	Lance Johnson	OL	6-4	210	So.	Birmingham, Ala.
80	Cianan Williams	WR	6-4	190	5th	Salem, Ala.
81	Gabe Glover	WR	6-1	205	So.	Dothan, Ala.
82	Colton Pitchford	WR	5-11	190	Sr.	Columbus, Texas
83	David Alpers III	TE	6-6	260	5th	Sioux Falls, S.D.
84	Franklin Baret Jr.	WR	6-4	205	Jr.	Raleigh, N.C.
86	Nabi Hoyt	WR	6-0	202	Jr.	Karmiel, Israel
87	Conor Donaghy	P	6-2	205	So.	Galbally, Ireland
87	Andrevius Smith	TE	6-7	250	Fr.	Midland City, Ala.
88	Kam Bell	TE	6-4	230	Sr.	Leesburg, Ga.
89	Camdon Pitchford	WR	5-9	170	So.	Columbus, Texas
90	Marvin Stringfellow	DL	6-2	290	Sr.	St. Louis, Mo.
90	Rio Hay	LS	6-1	220	Jr.	Dripping Springs, Texas
91	Greg Casimir	K	6-0	220	5th	Hamilton, N.J.
92	Marquis Hood	DL	6-2	275	5th	Decatur, Ga.
93	Jawaun Campbell	DL	5-11	282	Jr.	DeFuniak Springs, Fla.
94	Jumarion Larry	DE	6-4	270	5th	Hazlehurst, Miss.
95	Jermaine Waters Jr.	DL	6-4	270	Fr.	Cocoa, Fla.
96	Nii Addy	DL	6-2	310	Jr.	Montgomery, Ala.
97	Cleat Forrest	K	5-9	170	So.	Alexandria, Ala.
97	McCade Wright	DL	6-5	270	So.	Gadsden, Ala.
98	Kyten Davis	DL	6-5	245	Fr.	Lake City, Fla.
99	Andrew Rumph	DL	6-3	310	Sr.	Palmetto, Fla.

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Hometown
0	Da'Vontae Floyd	DB	5-10	180	R-So.	Norfolk, Va.
0	Jojo Stone	WR	5-11	185	R-So.	Fairburn, Ga.
1	Anthony Carrie	RB	6-0	205	Jr.	Tampa, Fla.
1	Shamir Sterlin	DB	6-2	215	R-So.	Port St. Lucie, Fla.
2	Maguire Anderson	WR	6-0	185	R -Jr.	Lutz, Fla.
2	DeAndre Boykins	DB	5-11	200	R-Sr.	Beaufort, S.C.
3	Demetrius Hill	DB	6-2	205	R-Sr.	Miami, Fla.
3	Devonte Lyons	RB	5-11	190	R-So.	St. Augustine, Fla.
4	Wesley Miller	DB	5-11	190	R-Sr.	Columbia, Miss.
4	James Resar	TE	6-5	235	R-So.	Fernandina Beach, Fla.
5	DJ Alexander	QB	6-1	210	Fr.	Douglasville, Ga.
5	Kenton Simmons	DL	6-4	245	Sr.	Jackson, Miss.
6	Lawrence Johnson	DB	6-1	190	Jr.	Miami, Fla.
6	Eric Nelson Jr.	WR	6-3	175	R-So.	Miramar, Fla.
7	Jai- Ayviauynn Celestine	DB	5-9	175	R-Sr.	Miami, Fla.
7	Kyle McNeal	WR	6-1	185	R-Jr.	Riviera Beach, Fla.
8	Ryan Gadson	DB	5-10	190	Jr.	Fort Myers, Fla.
8	Greg Gaines III	WR	6-3	200	R-Sr.	Tampa, Fla.
9	Josiah Taylor	LB	6-0	230	Jr.	Sebring, Fla.
9	Jackson Verdugo	TE	6-4	250	So.	College Station, Texas
10	Jayden Ford	RB	5-6	165	Fr.	Miami, Fla.
10	Ormond Wallace	DB	6-0	210	Sr.	Pinson, Ala.
11	Percy Courtney Jr.	LB	6-0	225	R-Sr.	Miami, Fla.
11	Zach Marker	QB	6-2	205	Gr.	Norwalk, Iowa
12	Amari Isaac	WR	6-1	205	R-Fr.	Hollywood, Fla.
12	RJ Moss Jr.	DL	6-3	285	R-Jr.	Biloxi, Miss.
13	Dante Anderson	DL	6-4	250	R-Sr.	Miami, Fla.
13	Tyson Carter	WR	5-11	175	So.	Orlando, Fla.
14	Kenny Williams	WR	5-10	170	R-Fr.	Miami, Fla.
14	Robert Williams	DL	6-2	235	R-So.	Miami, Fla.
15	Donovan Giles	WR	6-3	200	R-Sr.	Viera, Fla.
15	Nathan Jennings	DL	6-4	295	R-Jr.	Madison, Ala.
16	Zachary Waters	QB	6-0	195	R- Jr.	Boca Raton, Fla.
16	Nick Watson	DL	6-3	235	R-Sr.	Fort Lauderdale, Fla.
17	JJ Kohl	QB	6-7	250	R-Jr.	Ankeny, Iowa
17	Kani Smith	LB	6-2	210	So.	Pahokee, Fla.
18	Andre Brown	WR	5-6	150	R-So.	Miami, Fla.
18	Pickle Stewart	LB	6-1	230	R-So.	Atlanta, Ga.
19	Davis Brown	TE	6-4	275	Fr.	Raleigh, N.C.
19	Myles Cunningham	DB	5-11	170	R-So.	Atlanta, Ga.
20	Kiyante Ingram	DB	5-10	175	Fr.	Powder Springs, Ga.
20	Matt Ivaldi	QB	5-11	200	R-Fr.	Miami, Fla.
21	Karaijus Hayes	DB	5-11	185	Fr.	Sarasota, Fla.
21	Nate Henry	RB	5-9	190	R-Jr.	Miramar, Fla.
22	Sterling Joseph	RB	5-9	195	R-Fr.	Miami, Fla.
22	Brayshawn Littlejohn	LB	6-0	225	R-Jr.	Gaffney, S.C.
23	Tyderick Brown	DB	6-0	175	R-Fr.	Dallas, Texas
23	Trey Whirley	QB	5-11	195	R-So.	St. Petersburg, Fla.
24	King Massey	DL	6-4	245	R-Fr.	Jacksonville, Fla.
25	Jakari Johnson	DB	5-11	200	Fr.	Hollywood, Fla.
26	Zay West	DB	6-0	170	Fr.	Madison, Fla.
27	Eric Johnson	DB	6-0	190	Fr.	Loganville, Ga.
28	Orlando Syph-Timmons	LB	5-11	220	R-Jr.	Mountain House, Calif.
29	Dominic Turnbull	DB	6-2	195	Fr.	Miami, Fla.
30	Noah Sidan	P/K	5-8	165	Fr.	Hollywood, Fla.
31	Demetris Mincey	LB	6-1	210	Fr.	Fort Lauderdale, Fla.
32	Jaeden McMillan	DB	6-0	195	Fr.	Melbourne, Fla.
33	DeeJay Holmes Jr.	DL	6-1	260	R-Jr.	Pahokee, Fla.
34	Cam Davis	LB	6-2	225	R-Fr.	Pompano Beach, Fla.
35	Jahmani Chin-Suer	DB	5-9	170	Fr.	Fort Lauderdale, Fla.
36	Justin Compere	RB	5-10	170	Fr.	Opa Locka, Fla.
37	De'Andre Arnold	LB	6-0	195	Fr.	Madison, Fla.
41	Stone Springman	P	6-3	215	R-Jr.	Sarasota Fla.
43	Felix Visser	P	6-2	215	Fr.	Perth, Australia
44	Michael Smarts	DL	6-4	240	Fr.	Fort Lauderdale, Fla.
45	Lamont Green Jr.	DL	6-3	235	R-Jr.	Miami, Fla.
46	Holden Harkins	LS	5-10	190	Fr.	Fort Lauderdale, Fla.
47	Justin Wood	LS	5-11	195	R-Jr.	Miami, Fla.
48	Robert Czeremcha	K	6-3	220	R-So.	Miami, Fla.
48	Richard Nwaukoni	DL	6-3	280	R-Sr.	Coconut Creek, Fla.
49	Conrad Tolerico	P	6-1	175	Fr.	Fort Lauderdale, Fla.
50	Jeremy Smith	OL	6-5	290	R-Fr.	Miami, Fla.
51	Manasseh Ripert	OL	6-4	290	R-Sr.	Lakeland, Fla.
52	Akeem Neal	OL	6-5	315	R-So.	Orange Park, Fla.
53	Nathan Tveit	OL	6-3	310	R-Fr.	Oviedo. Fla.
54	Zaire Flournoy	OL	6-3	335	R-Sr.	Douglasville, Ga.
55	Jamorie Flagg	DL	6-3	315	R-So.	Miami, Fla.
55	Daveion Harley	OL	6-1	310	R-Jr.	Quincy, Fla.
56	Marc Michel Jr.	OL	6-2	300	R-Fr.	Davenport, Fla.
58	Oscar Colon	OL	6-5	310	R-Jr.	Brooklyn, N.Y.
61	Ignacio Zulaica	OL	5-11	265	Fr.	West Palm Beach, Fla.
66	Takaylen Muex	OL	6-3	320	R-Fr.	Jacksonville, Fla.
67	Jon Rodriguez	OL	6-5	300	R-So.	Fort Lauderdale, Fla.
71	Antonio Tripp Jr.	OL	6-3	305	R-Jr.	Baltimore, Md.
73	Spencer Webb	OL	6-3	295	Sr.	Alton, Ill.
74	Matias Garcia	OL	6-0	285	R-Fr.	Fort Lauderdale, Fla.
75	Miguel Cedeno	OL	6-8	320	R-Sr.	Davie, Fla.
76	Samson Chazulle	OL	6-3	325	R-Fr.	Fort Lauderdale, Fla.
77	Riley Wilson	OL	6-4	285	Fr.	Tampa, Fla.
78	Nickolas Molina	OL	6-7	290	R-Sr.	Bronx, N.Y.
80	Dylan Herman	WR	5-11	190	R-So.	Las Vegas, Nev.
81	Ayden Passley	TE	6-5	230	Fr.	Jupiter, Fla.
82	Justin Little	WR	5-10	170	So.	Loxahatchee, Fla.
82	Ethan Silva	K	5-11	170	So.	Miami, Fla.
83	Malik Penson	WR	5-10	170	Fr.	Miami, Fla.
84	Barrett Schulz	WR	6-5	190	Fr.	Lake Mary, Fla.
86	Rodrigo Marron	LS	5-8	165	Fr.	Miami, Fla.
87	Remy Goins	TE	6-2	215	Fr.	Miami, Fla.
88	Kevin Schaeffer	TE	6-5	245	Gr.	Hewitt, N.J.
88	Elijah Simmons	DL	6-0	285	R-Sr.	Charlotte, N.C.
89	Sean Burke	TE	6-5	235	R-Fr.	Hollywood, Fla.
90	Anthony Cunningham	DL	6-4	295	Sr.	East St. Louis, Ill.
91	Kyrie Samuel	DL	5-11	260	R-Sr.	Fort Lauderdale, Fla.
92	Lukenson Morancy	DL	6-3	275	Fr.	Apopka, Fla.
93	Nealan Perez	DL	6-5	225	Fr.	Miami, Fla.
95	Anthony Smith	DL	6-2	345	So.	Fort Lauderdale, Fla.
97	Elisha Baldridge	DL	6-1	245	R-Jr.	Big Prairie, Ohio
99	Germaine Carter	DL	5-11	270	Jr.	Miami, Fla.

MEET THE GAMECOCKS

JAX STATE

0 LB



MYLES BUTLER
ATLANTA, GA

1 S



CALEB NIX
PHENIX CITY, AL

2 LB



MORVEN JOSEPH
LAKELAND, FL

2 QB



KADYN MITCHELL
DOTHAN, AL

3 WR



DARIUS CANNON
GAINESVILLE, GA

3 CB



TRE'QUON FEGANS
ANNISTON, AL

4 TE



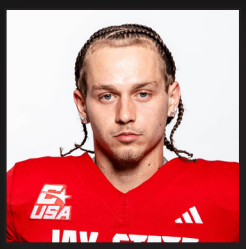
SHANE PAYTON HODGES
NEW ORLEANS, LA

5 S



ROB BILLINS IV
MARIETTA, GA

5 WR



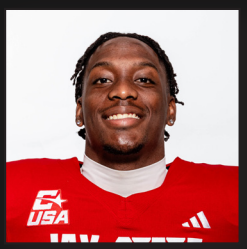
DYLAN GENTRY
PHENIX CITY, AL

6 S



KADEN COOK
ROUND ROCK, TX

6 RB



JALEN LIKELY
BREWTON, AL

MEET THE GAMECOCKS

7
RB



KRISTIAN LANDO
CARTERSVILLE, GA

7
S



MARC WOODS
MADISON, AL

8
CB



JQ BROOKS
BESSEMER, AL

9
CB



JONAVAN CARR
LAKELAND, FL

9
WR



RONNEL JOHNSON
MCDONOUGH, GA

10
CB



RJ RAINER
CHARLOTTE, NC

10
WR



AJ WATKINS
LITHONIA, GA

11
WR



DEONDRE JOHNSON
NEWBURGH, NY

11
LB



WALTER REDDICK
THOMASVILLE, GA

12
S



BRENNAN CORE
PHENIX CITY, AL

12
QB



CADEN CREEL
FAIRHOPE, AL

13
LB



JACOB CRUZ
ACWORTH, GA

MEET THE GAMECOCKS

13 WR



CADE FRIER
TALLAHASSEE, FL

14 DL



ANGEL TOOMBS
MILWAUKEE, WI

14 WR



BLAKE WALLACE
BOCA RATON, FL

15 DL



TAE FLOYD
OCALA, FL

15 QB



JACK MORAN
HILLSBOROUGH, NJ

16 DL



QUAY HOOD
ATLANTA, GA

16 QB



NOAH LEE
JACKSONVILLE, AL

17 CB



RODARION JONES
ALBANY, GA

17 WR



JAMILL WILLIAMS
ATLANTA, GA

18 CB



KEIYON TURNER
MESA, AZ

19 S



SHONDELL HARRIS
MOBILE, AL

19 QB



DONOVAN MOORHEAD
AKRON, OH

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MEET THE GAMECOCKS

20
DB



TRE'VON PRINGLE
THOMASVILLE, GA

20
RB



MAURICE WINSTON
WEDOWEE, AL

21
RB



JUSTUS SAVAGE
ATLANTA, GA

21
CB

TIM ANTHONY
SNELLVILLE, GA

22
RB



LUCAS FARRINGTON
ATLANTA, GA

22
CB



JAHEIM JENKINS
BAINBRIDGE, GA

23
WR



TEMARION FOSTER
PAHOKEE, FL

24
S



TY SIMS
GADSDEN, AL

24
RB



JACOB CORNEJO
CENTRE, AL

MEET THE GAMECOCKS

25
S



VERNON WOODWARD III
DELAND, FL

26
S



BRICE McKENZIE
HIGHLAND HOME, AL

27
S



RIGGS DUNN
TRUSSVILLE, AL

28
DL



CHRISTOPHER JOHNSON
MONTGOMERY, AL

28
WR



LANDON WATKINS
PISGAH, AL

29
CB



JAVAN ALLISON
MIAMI, FL

29
WR



ROLLIE PINTO
PIEDMONT, AL

30
TE



LUKE GILBERT
PISGAH, AL

30
S



DJ VINSON
MONTGOMERY, AL

MEET THE GAMECOCKS

31 LB



TRISTAN LYLES
PHENIX CITY, AL

32 RB



CEDRIC KOUEMI
GAITHERSBURG, MD

32 CB



MICAH McCARROLL
PLEASANT GROVE, AL

34 LB



JAMESON McCOLLOUGH
AUSTELL, GA

35 LB



AIDAN THOMPSON
WINDER, GA

36 LB



BRAYDEN MATTHEWS
ATLANTA, GA

37 LB



CAI MAYOWA
HOOVER, AL

37 K



GARRISON RIPPA
LOCUST GROVE, GA

38 CB



JAMARIOUS ACKLIN
HUNTSVILLE, AL

39 S



KEITH CHRISTEIN
HOOVER, AL

39 WR



BRYSON ROUILLIER
GULF BREEZE, FL

40 LB



WALKER O'STEEN
WHITE PLAINS, AL

MEET THE GAMECOCKS

41
P



CARTER LEWIS
MOBILE, AL

41
TE



TRACE THOMPSON
ATTALLA, AL

42
LB



DEVIN PETTWAY
MOBILE, AL

43
LB



AUSTIN BOUCK
DESTIN, FL

44
DL



KHURTISS PERRY
MONTGOMERY, AL

44
TE



JAMESON SCISSUM
ATTALLA, AL

45
LS



DIXON MUSGROVE
CUMMING, GA

45
LB



MIKEY ROSA
CHARLESTON, SC

46
S



AVION WILLIS
WEDOWEE, AL

47
LB



MARIO ALLOWAY
FORT WALTON BEACH, FL

48
LB



PEYTON CONSAUL
HILTON, NY



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COSTNER
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MEET THE GAMECOCKS

49
S



JAY STONE
MONTGOMERY, AL

50
OL



LUCAS MRACHKOVSKIY
ODENVILLE, AL

50
LB



SHAYNADD WHITFIELD
OXFORD, AL

51
OL



BO BURKES
CENTREVILLE, AL

52
OL



STORM FAIN
HOOVER, AL

53
LB



IAN MITCHELL
PLEASANT GROVE, AL

53
OL



MAX SHIVER
CUSSETA, AL

54
OL



MARKEVIAN BLAKE
GAINESTOWN, AL

54
DL



JACKSON BUNN
OXFORD, AL

55
OL



RYAN WALKER
ALABASTER, AL

56
OL



DAYLAN MARTIN
BAY MINETTE, AL

57
OL



OLIVER MALDONADO
MIAMI, FL

MEET THE GAMECOCKS

58
OL



KENDARIUS BLAIR
BIRMINGHAM, AL

59
LB



MAC SANDERS
McDONOUGH, GA

60
OL



WILLIAM HATHCOCK
PERRY, FL

62
OL



HADINE DIABY
LOGANVILLE, GA

63
OL



RYLAND BRAGG
PENSACOLA, FL

65
OL



BRITIN WITT
FOREST, VA

67
OL



SHAUN MARTIN
MOBILE, AL

70
OL



JEREMIAH ORR
PINELAND, SC

71
OL



CAM STANCIL
MADISON, MS

72
OL



NATE SMITH
JACKSONVILLE, AL

73
OL



J.R. JERNIGAN
BREWTON, AL

74
OL



AMARII ATCHISON
DOUGLASVILLE, GA

MEET THE GAMECOCKS

75 OL



CALEB HOLMES
FAIRBURN, GA

76 OL



JT HOWELL
SAVANNAH, GA

77 OL



VERN FAULK
PERRY, FL

78 OL



WILL COOPER
FAIRHOPE, AL

79 OL



LANCE JOHNSON
BIRMINGHAM, AL

80 WR



CIANAN WILLIAMS
SALEM, AL

81 WR



GABE GLOVER
DOTHAN, AL

82 WR



COLTON PITCHFORD
COLUMBUS, TX

83 TE



DAVID ALPERS III
SIOUX FALLS, SD

84 WR



FRANKLIN BARET JR.
RALEIGH, NC

86 WR



NABI HOYT
KARMIEL, ISRAEL

87 P



CONOR DONAGHY
GALBALLY, IRELAND

MEET THE GAMECOCKS

87 TE



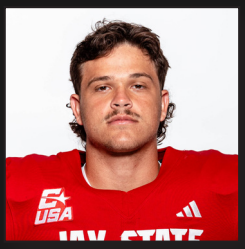
ANDREVIUS SMITH
MIDLAND CITY, AL

88 TE



KAM BELL
LEESBURG, GA

89 WR



CAMDON PITCHFORD
COLUMBUS, TX

90 LS



RIO HAY
DRIPPING SPRINGS, TX

90 DL



MARVIN STRINGFELLOW
ST. LOUIS, MO

91 K



GREG CASIMIR
HAMILTON, NJ

92 DL



MARQUIS HOOD
DECATUR, GA

93 DL



JAWAUN CAMPBELL
DEFUNIAK SPRINGS, FL

94 DL



JUMARION LARRY
HAZLEHURST, MS

MEET THE GAMECOCKS

95
DL



JERMAINE WATERS JR.
COCOA, FL

96
DL



NII ADDY
MONTGOMERY, AL

97
K



CLEAT FOREST
ALEXANDRIA, AL

97
DL



MCCADE WRIGHT
GADSDEN, AL

98
DL



KYTEN DAVIS
LAKE CITY, FL

99
DL



ANDREW RUMPH
PALMETTO, FL



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BOWL SYNOPSIS

CUSA BOWL OVERVIEW

Conference USA will continue its established bowl affiliations for the 2026 postseason, as Bowl Season announced the extension of existing conference bowl agreements with the FBS conferences. The league is guaranteed seven bowl appearances, providing its members with a broad range of postseason opportunities across the country.

CUSA will once again send a team to the New Orleans Bowl against a Sun Belt Conference school. The league has a longstanding history with the event, having placed a team in the bowl 21 times since its inception in 2001. CUSA teams have won each of the last four New Orleans Bowl games.

The conference's remaining guaranteed selections in the cycle will come from 14 games which are owned and operated by ESPN Events. The bowl lineup offers Conference USA institutions and student-athletes postseason destinations throughout the nation while continuing the league's commitment to providing quality postseason opportunities and experiences.

GUARANTEED SELECTION:

NEW ORLEANS BOWL
(New Orleans, Louisiana)
www.neworleansbowl.org

REMAINING SELECTIONS (FIVE FROM THIS GROUP):

IS4S SALUTE TO VETERANS BOWL
(Montgomery, Alabama)
www.salutetoveteransbowl.com

BOCA RATON BOWL
(Boca Raton, Florida)
www.bocaratonbowl.com

UNION HOME MORTGAGE GASPARILLA BOWL
(Tampa, Florida)
www.gasparillabowl.com

MYRTLE BEACH BOWL
(Myrtle Beach, South Carolina)
www.myrtlebeachbowlgame.com

PUERTO RICO BOWL
(Bayamón, Puerto Rico)

STAFFDNA CURE BOWL
(Orlando, Florida)
www.curebowl.com

RADIANCE TECHNOLOGIES INDEPENDENCE BOWL
(Shreveport, Louisiana)
www.radiancetechnologiesindependencebowl.com

LOCKHEED MARTIN ARMED FORCES BOWL
(Fort Worth, Texas)
www.armedforcesbowl.com

FRISCO BOWL
(Frisco, Texas)
thefriscobowl.com

ISLETA NEW MEXICO BOWL
(Albuquerque, New Mexico)
www.newmexicobowl.com

WASABI FENWAY BOWL
(Boston, Massachusetts)
www.mlb.com/redsox/fenway-bowl

68 VENTURES BOWL
(Mobile, Alabama)
www.68venturesbowl.com

JLAB BIRMINGHAM BOWL
(Birmingham, Alabama)
birminghambowl.com

SERVPRO FIRST RESPONDER BOWL
(Dallas, Texas)
www.firstresponderbowl.com

There is no set selection order among CUSA's bowl partners.

CFP

COLLEGE FOOTBALL PLAYOFF

THE PLAYOFF

The CFP will once again utilize a 12-team format for the 2026 season. Guaranteed bids will be awarded for the top five conference champions in the CFP rankings, and at-large bids will be given to the seven highest-ranked remaining teams. The four highest-ranked schools will receive first-round byes, and the remaining teams will play each other in the first round at the home fields of the better seeds, matched in the standard format of 5-12, 6-11, 7-10 and 8-9. The championship will continue to be held at a separately determined neutral site. First round games will occur December 18-19, quarterfinal games December 30-January 1, semifinal games Jan. 14-15 and the championship game on Monday, January 25.

THE SELECTION COMMITTEE

A selection committee will choose the 12 teams for the playoff based on their performance during the regular season, including, strength of schedule, head-to-head results, championships won, and other factors.

THE ROTATION

New Year's Six bowl games will be introduced in the quarterfinal round. The semifinals will be played in bowls on a rotating basis while the nationaly championship host site is determined through bids by prospective host sites.

For the 2026-27 season, the Fiesta Bowl (Dec. 30), Peach Bowl (Jan. 1), Cotton Bowl (Jan. 1) and Rose Bowl (Jan. 1) will host quarterfinal games, while the Orange Bowl (Jan. 14) and Sugar Bowl (Jan. 15) will host semifinals. The College Football Championship will be held on Monday, Jan. 25 in Las Vegas, Nev.

CUSA AND THE COLLEGE FOOTBALL PLAYOFF

As a member of the College Football Playoff, Conference USA will be a part of one of the College Football Playoff bowls if it has the highest rated champion from among the American Athletic, CUSA, Mid-American, Mountain West, Pac-12 and Sun Belt Conferences.





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Greg Seitz is in his 34th year in the athletic department at Jacksonville State University. He has served as Director of Athletics since being officially named to the role on February 26, 2016.

Seitz served as interim Athletic Director for 14 months leading up to his full-time appointment, marking his third term as the interim Athletic Director for the Gamecocks.

In Seitz's decade at the helm, the Gamecocks have experienced unprecedented success on the field and in the classroom. The architect of Jax State's move from NCAA's Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) to the Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) and Conference USA, Seitz has navigated the athletic department through the recovery of the 2018 EF-3 tornado, the 2020 pandemic and a series of three conference changes over a four-year span.

During his tenure, the Gamecocks have shined in the classroom. Jax State student-athletes have earned a 3.20-or-better department GPA in each of the last seven years, including the department's highest combined GPA of 3.361 set during the most recent 2025-26 academic year.

Since taking the reins full-time in 2016, Seitz has hired an impressive list of head coaches that have produced Jax State's first two trips to March Madness and the NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament (Ray Harper), first FBS bowl appearance, bowl victory and FBS Conference Championship (Rich Rodriguez) and the school's first Division I national championship in women's bowling (Shannon O'Keefe). The Gamecocks have claimed multiple softball and volleyball conference crowns, while also regularly placing individuals in NCAA postseason competition in golf, tennis and track and field. In 2019, Jax State baseball won its first NCAA Tournament games eliminating Illinois and Clemson en route to the Oxford Regional Final.

This past spring, baseball and softball each swept the regular season and tournament titles in Conference USA and advance to NCAA Regionals. Jax State was the only Division I school in the nation to sweep those four titles in 2026. The 2025-26 year also featured a third consecutive FBS bowl game for the Gamecocks - now alongside Marshall as the only FCS-to-FBS team to make a bowl in its first three seasons. The Gamecocks beat historic rival Troy, 17-13, in the Salute to Veterans Bowl in Montgomery. Jax State later returned to the national spotlight winning the NCAA National Championship in bowling, the second title in three seasons.

In the school's second season as a full-fledged FBS and Conference USA member in 2024-25, the Gamecocks reached the championship game/round and finished first or second in the league in six sports (football, men's basketball, bowling, women's golf, softball and baseball). A feat made more impressive by the fact that CUSA ranked Top 10 in conference RPI in four of those sports (Bowling, Men's Basketball, Softball, Baseball) The Gamecocks hosted and won the 2024 CUSA Football Championship with a dominant 52-12 win over Western Kentucky at AmFirst Stadium to win the program's first FBS conference title. Later that season, Jax State made its debut in the men's basketball National Invitation Tournament (NIT), where the Gamecocks made another national television splash with an 81-64 Opening Round win at Georgia Tech for the program's first Power Four win in the last 50 years.

Jax State made a head-first dive into Conference USA and FBS football for 2023-24. The Gamecocks earned the school's first FBS bowl appearance and bowl victory in the New Orleans Bowl, while the upstart

bowling program claimed the 2024 NCAA national championship. It led to what was one of the school's best finishes in the year-end LEARFIELD Director's Cup standings with Jax State scoring 145 points to rank 123rd among all 350+ Division I institutions. That mark was beat during the previous 2025-26 campaign that saw Jax State score 220 points and rank 95th nationally.

From Seitz earliest days leading the Gamecocks, the Jax State football team won a JSU and Ohio Valley Conference-record five consecutive league titles and won a league-record 36-straight OVC games from 2014 to 2018, the second-longest conference win streak in FCS history. The Gamecocks were the only Division I program to win its conference title outright during those five seasons. The 2015 season saw the football team post it's first-ever No. 1 ranking in school history, and earn the No. 1 National seed in the FCS Playoffs before advancing to Jax State's first Division I National Championship Game appearance in Frisco, Texas. The Gamecocks set more than 50 school records and ranked in the top three in attendance at the FCS level after hosting three-straight home playoff games.

In 2017, Jax State reached the Division I NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament for the first time under first-year head coach Ray Harper. The Gamecocks made their second all-time appearance in March Madness in 2022, winning the ASUN Conference in their first year. The transition to the ASUN saw immediate success on the hardwood as the women's basketball program also took part in its first Div. I postseason with a bid to the WNIT.

Seitz has been with Jax State since 1993, when he began working as assistant sports information director. In 1999, he became Sports Information Director and was promoted to Associate Athletic Director in 2002, before being promoted to Senior Associate Athletic Director in 2011.

During his term as interim and Athletic Director, Seitz has been instrumental in many of the facility upgrades at Jacksonville State, including renovations at Rudy Abbott Field at Jim Case Stadium, Pete Mathews Coliseum, the Loring and Debbie White Football Complex and the Riley Green Athletic Sports Performance Center.

In 2017, Seitz announced an extension of a 14-year partnership between Jax State Athletics and Adidas, securing the Portland, Ore., based company as the Gamecocks' official athletic apparel and footwear brand.

Also during 2017, Seitz and the Board of Trustees announced plans to install new state-of-the-art high definition video boards at football, baseball and softball, while also placing new scoreboards at the Jax State Soccer Field and the Jax State Tennis Courts. That project went one step further in 2019, when a pair of video boards were installed inside Pete Mathews Coliseum as part of the reconstruction process following the 2018 EF-3 tornado that struck campus.

As part of the campus rebuild following the tornado, Seitz brought the athletic department's administrative home to Pete Mathews Coliseum creating new office space throughout the third floor of the facility. The transition paved the way for a new main athletic ticket office in the coliseum lobby, updated basketball, soccer and volleyball locker rooms, and the installation of a full-size practice court on the east end of the building.

Under his guidance, Jax State athletics transitioned into the ASUN Conference in 2021, to better align with the evolving college landscape, and soon after accepted an invitation to join Conference USA beginning in 2023. The move elevated the Gamecocks' football program to the highest level of college football. Among his notable hires since taking over as AD, Seitz landed Rich Rodriguez to lead Jax State's efforts into FBS and Conference USA. The move proved successful from the start as Rodriguez and the Gamecocks won the ASUN Conference in his first season in 2022 during Jax State's final FCS season. The momentum continued into Jax State's debut FBS season in 2023 when Rodriguez and the Gamecocks became just the fifth team to play in a bowl during the program's first full season of FBS competition. Jax State then became the first and only team to win a bowl in its first FBS campaign with a thrilling 34-31 overtime victory over Louisiana in the R+L Carrier's New Orleans Bowl.

Seitz has served on the NCAA Men's Final Four Media Coordinator team for the last 14 years and was just named to the NCAA Division I baseball committee, serving a four-year term through 2028. He also serves as a site representative for the NCAA for the Division I Baseball Regionals and Super Regionals, and has worked the College World Series for the past six years. Seitz served a four-year term on the NCAA FCS Football Committee, serving as Chair in 2019, and has been a site representative for the last 11 years. In addition, he served as a member of the NCAA Football Oversight Committee in 2019-20 and was a member of the NCAA Championships Financial Working Group that was formed in 2019.

He has worked numerous NCAA Championships and Alabama High School Athletic Association events over the last 30-plus years. In 2002, he became the first SID elected as President of the Alabama Sports Writers Association and currently serves as the organization's secretary and treasurer.



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