

APPALACHIAN STATE MOUNTAINEERS

Sun Belt - East Division



APPALACHIAN STATE BIO

National Championships - 0



Sun Belt Championships: 4
(Last Won: 2019)

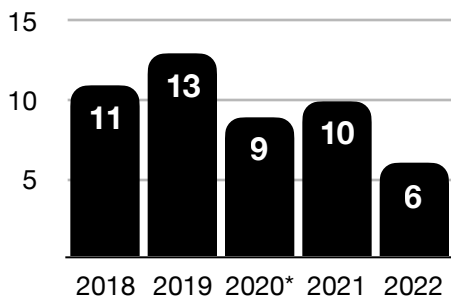
Location: **Boone, NC**

All-Time Record: **135-86-5**

2022 Results: **6-6**

Head Coach: **Shawn Clark**
4th Year (26-13)

5-YEAR WIN TREND



Kidd Brewer Stadium (24,050)

College Football's "Cinderella" Strikes Again

Appalachian State's stunning victory over Michigan back in 2007 put the Mountaineers squarely on the college football map in what could be considered as the greatest upset of all time. Just a few years later, App State joined the ranks of the FBS and they've seen simply remarkable success. They've churned out one double-digit win season after another even with three head coaches in the last five seasons (Scott Satterfield - Cincinnati, Eli Drinkwitz - Missouri, Shawn Clark - 5th year at App State). They've wracked up four Sun Belt titles and have a near perfect record in bowl games (6-1). Seemingly the only thing missing from Appalachian State's FBS resume is a New Year's Six appearance. The Mountaineers have come quite close in the last few seasons and have sprung more upsets along the way. In 2018 the Mountaineers took #10 Penn State to overtime to begin the season before eventually losing 45-38. However, in 2019 App State actually did pull an upset over North Carolina and later in the season they went to Columbia and took out South Carolina 20-15! Despite a 12-1 record and a Sun Belt Championship, the Mountaineers were narrowly passed by Memphis for a New Year's Six berth. In 2021 App State nearly took down #22 Miami and again finished the season with double-digit wins.

The first part of the 2022 season was an utter whirlwind for the Mountaineers. They were actually home favorites to North Carolina and lost in a wild shootout 63-61. Rather than hang their heads, App State took the road against Texas A&M and shocked the Aggies 17-14 for another marquee upset. The week after, College Gameday made their first trip to Boone and a raucous crowd watched as a tipped desperation hail mary throw landed in the arms of Christian Horn for a game winning touchdown over Troy. Emotions were sky high and the Mountaineers unfortunately suffered a letdown game against James Madison and lost. Despite the overall success of the first three weeks, App State battled inconsistencies the rest of the way and finished just 6-6. Because two of the Mountaineers' wins were against FCS opponents, they weren't bowl eligible and saw their bowl game streak end at seven games.

What exactly went wrong for App State? For one, the defense allowed 26.8 points, the most since the inaugural FBS season of 2014. Ironically, their total yards allowed were almost identical to the previous season and they allowed 22.1 points per game in 2021. For the second straight season only four starters return on defense but this year the top two tacklers are back. New defensive coordinator Scott Sloan will have to get the most out of this unit and will run a 3-3-5 scheme. **Nick Ross** made a team-best 73 tackles at safety and **Andrew Parker** was close behind with 68 at linebacker. The Mountaineers struggled to consistently bring pressure on opposing quarterbacks, especially in Sun Belt play. **DeAndre Dingle-Prince** didn't record a sack but is the only returner on the young front three although App State did add Rutgers transfer **Shawn Collins**. Since nearly half of the sacks from last year walked out the door with Jalen McLeod and Nick Hampton departing, this remains an area of concern. The secondary will rely on a couple of transfer veterans in **EJ Jackson** (Marshall) and **Tarek Funderburk** (Richmond).

The offense continued to home along per usual and quarterback Chas Brice wrapped up another extremely impressive year. After starting the last two seasons, he departs leaving **Ryan Burger** as the starter. He made just six pass attempts last season as a true freshman but should offer more in the running game. A plethora of running backs toted the football for the Mountaineers including **Nate Noel** who rushed for 604 yards on just 87 carries (6.9 yards per carry). **Ahmani Marshall** and **Anderson Castle** add valuable depth. Thankfully for Burger, almost the entire receiving corps returns including **Christian Horn** (33 catches, 600 yards, 4 touchdowns). **Dishpan Davis**, **Kaedin Robinson**, and **Dalton Stroman** all had over 300 yards receiving.













The Bottom Line: I expect a bounce back year from the Mountaineers. Their last three losses were all by a touchdown or less and despite just a 3-5 record in conference they actually outgained their opponents in yardage which is usually a sign pointing up. The Sun Belt is loaded with quality teams so it will be difficult to go from 6-6 to contending for a conference title, but if there's any team that has proven they can win a ton of games in the SBC, it's App State.

Projection: 9-3 (2nd in Sun Belt East)

2022 Statistics

Points Scored	Rush Yards	Pass Yards	Turnover Margin
34.9	204.4	250.9	+9
23rd in FBS	21st in FBS	84th in FBS	16th in FBS
Points Allowed	Rush YDS Allowed	Pass YDS Allowed	
26.8	127.5	219.7	
69th in FBS	34th in FBS	53rd in FBS	

2023 Appalachian State Schedule

Week	Date	Team
1	Sat, Sept 2	 vs. Gardner-Webb
2	Sat, Sept 9	 @ North Carolina
3	Sat, Sept 16	 vs. East Carolina
4	Sat, Sept 23	 @ Wyoming
5	Sat, Sept 30	 @ ULM
6	Bye Week	
7	Tue, Oct 10	 vs. Coastal Car
8	Sat, Oct 21	 @ Old Dominion
9	Sat, Oct 28	 vs. So. Miss
10	Sat, Nov 4	 vs. Marshall
11	Sat, Nov 11	 @ Georgia State
12	Sat, Nov 18	 @ J Madison
13	Sat, Nov 25	 vs. Georgia So.

Conference Games in Bold

KEY GAMES

Sat, Sept 9: @ North Carolina - The Mountaineers came ever so close to defeating the Tar Heels last year in a wild shootout with 124 combined points and actually did knock off North Carolina in Chapel Hill their last time there (2019). Ironically, App State went 1-4 on the road last season with the lone win against Texas A&M.

Tue, Oct 10: vs. Coastal Carolina - Grayson McCall's return to Conway means that the Chants will be incredibly competitive in the Sun Belt yet again.

Sat, Nov 4: vs. Marshall - The Thundering Herd claimed a 28-21 victory over App State in their first season in the Sun Belt. They bring a strong team with conference title hopes into Kidd Brewer.

KEY PLAYERS

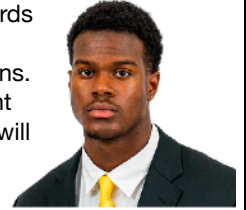
Nate Noel - RB

Noel had a breakout campaign in 2021 that feature 1,128 rush yards and 4 touchdowns. He was banged up throughout 2022 and received less than half of the carries from 2021 but made the most of them with a promising 6.9 yards per carry. He cooked the Georgia Southern defense for 171 yards on just 12 carries and scored three times including a 51-yard dash to the end zone. Noel's talent and pedigree are well established so if he's healthy he'll be one of the best running backs in the conference.



Christian Horn - WR

Horn needed only 33 catches to reach 600 yards in his third season with the Mountaineers and led the team in yards and receiving touchdowns. He's an athletic, speedy receiver with excellent ball skills. Assuming the App State run game will keep chugging along in 2023, he'll be especially dangerous in play action scenarios and he'll burn defenses deep.



2022 RESULTS (6-6)

North Carolina (L 61-63)

Texas A&M (W 17-14)

Troy (W 32-28)

James Madison (L 28-32)

The Citadel (W 49-0)

@ Texas State (L 24-36)

Georgia State (W 42-17)

Robert Morris (W 42-3)

@ Coastal Carolina (L 28-35)

@ Marshall (L 21-28)

Old Dominion (W 27-14)

@ Georgia Southern (L 48-51)

APPSTATE

RECRUITING

2023 Class Ranking

80th

(Via 24/7 Sports)