Wofford football standout Matt Nelson has been selected as the 2003-04 Southern Conference Male Student-Athlete of the Year.

Nelson is the first Terrier to receive that honor in Wofford's seven years of league play. He will be presented the award tonight at the annual SoCon Honors Dinner held at the Crowne Plaza Resort on Hilton Head Island.

The SoCon Male Athlete of the Year is selected annually by SoCon athletic directors and a media member representing each conference school. Prior to 1990-91, the award was selected solely by members of the SoCon Sports Media Association (SCSMA). Beginning in 1991-92, the award was named after the late Bob Waters, who was Western Carolina’s head football coach from 1969-88.

Nelson placed third in voting for The Sports Network's Buck Buchanan Award, honoring Division I-AA's top defensive player. He was also a consensus first-team All-America. The SoCon media selected Nelson as the league's Defensive Player of the Year. The coaches made him a unanimous first-team All-SoCon pick.

The senior free safety led Wofford to a 12-2 record, including an 8-0 SoCon mark for the Terriers' first league championship and the first perfect SoCon season since 1998. Nelson was named Wofford's Most Valuable Player as the Terriers advanced to the I-AA national semifinals. He was the SoCon Defensive Player of the Week following a 42-16 win at The Citadel which clinched the league title for the Terriers. He was also named the SoCon Football Player of the Month in both November and December.

A Grove City, Ohio, native, Nelson posted a team-best 167 tackles as he concluded his career with a Terrier record 452 stops. He is also the school leader in all-time solo tackles with 296.

He had six interceptions for Wofford's highest total since 1993. Nelson led the Terriers with 16 pass breakups while forcing two fumbles and recovering one. He had three red-zone takeaways.

Nelson was key in Wofford topping all of Division I football (I-A and I-AA) in turnover margin at 1.64 (+23). The Terriers were also third nationally in I-AA in scoring defense, allowing just 14.8 points per game.

Nelson, who graduated last month, maintained a 3.0 grade point average in his finance major and was also involved in several community projects.
The defending Southern Conference champion Wofford football team is ranked ninth in Street & Smith’s preseason Division I-AA Top 25 poll.

The Terriers return 15 of 22 starters from last year’s squad that advanced to the Division I-AA national semifinals with a 12-2 overall record and 8-0 SoCon mark.

Wofford was No. 2 in a preseason I-AA poll previously released by Athlon Sports.

Wofford opens the 2004 campaign on Sept. 11 at South Carolina State.
Wofford's Jeff Zolman has been ranked by The Sports Network as the third-best option quarterback in Division I-AA this season.

A senior from Dayton, Ohio, Zolman placed third on the Terriers last year with 607 yards rushing on a 4.7 per carry mark. He ran for nine touchdowns while adding another score in the air as he completed 58.5 percent (31-of-53) of his pass attempts for 389 yards.

Zolman ran for a career-high 141 yards to go with two touchdowns on 12 carries in last year's 31-10 first-round playoff win over North Carolina A&T. He came back the next week with 94 yards rushing and three touchdowns in a 34-17 quarterfinal-round victory over defending national champion Western Kentucky.

Georgia Southern's Chaz Williams was ranked as the top option quarterback in Division I-AA. Bucknell's Darius Wilson was second.
Season tickets are now available for the 2004 Wofford College football season.

Last year's Terrier squad captured the SoCon championship and advanced to the Division I-AA national semifinals. This year's six-game home schedule includes visits from SoCon rivals Chattanooga (Oct. 2), Western Carolina (Oct. 16), The Citadel (Oct. 30) and Furman (Nov. 13). Wofford will also host Johnson C. Smith (Sept. 25) and Big South champion Gardner-Webb (Nov. 6).

Reserved seat ticket packages are $95. Season ticket renewals must be received by July 9. Individual home game tickets will be available to the general public on Aug. 9.

For more information or to obtain an order form, please call the Wofford athletic ticket office at (864) 597-4090.
Wofford offensive guard Bobby Gibbs has received preseason All-America honors from Street & Smith's.

He is the only SoCon player to appear on the squad.

A senior from Corbin, Ky., Gibbs was a 2003 first-team All-America by the National Football Gazette in addition to earning second and third-team honors, respectively, by the Associated Press and The Sports Network.

Gibbs placed in a tie for second on the Terriers with 152 knockdown blocks last season. He was a first-team All-SoCon selection by the league coaches and media.

Gibbs was Wofford’s Offensive Player of the Week with 13 knockdowns in a 35-13 victory over South Carolina State. He totaled a season-high 23 knockdowns while grading out at 95.4 percent in the 34-17 quarterfinal-round playoff win over Western Kentucky. He also had 22 knockdown blocks in the 42-14 victory at Chattanooga and 14 in the 20-14 win versus Georgia Southern.
Six Wofford football players have received preseason All-SoCon honors from southernpigskin.com with defensive end Lee Basinger being named the league's Defensive Player of the Year.

Joining Basinger on the preseason All-SoCon team are nose tackle Katon Bethay, offensive guards Eric Deutsch and Bobby Gibbs, running back Kevious Johnson and inside linebacker Timmy Thrift.

Basinger topped the Terrier defensive front last season with 90 tackles, including 17 for a loss. The Kannapolis, N.C., native had six sacks, seven quarterback hurries and three fumble recoveries.

The defending SoCon champion Terriers were picked to finish second in the league. Wofford's offensive and defensive lines were rated as the SoCon's best units.

Deutsch, a consensus first-team All-America in 2003 and the recipient of the SoCon's Jacobs Blocking Trophy, was tabbed as the league's Best NFL Prospect. He teams with Gibbs to give Wofford a pair of returning All-Americas at guard.

Thrift was named the Most Athletic Linebacker. The senior from Hilliard, Fla., placed second on last year's Terrier squad with 123 tackles in earning All-SoCon honors.

Johnson was the 2003 SoCon Freshman of the Year after topping the Terriers with 823 yards rushing and nine touchdowns.

Mike Ayers was chosen as the Best Coach. Ayers was last year's recipient of the Eddie Robinson Award as the Division I-AA National Coach of the Year. He placed second in the 2002 voting. He has been the SoCon Coach of the Year three times in the last four seasons.

Wofford's Nov. 13 home game with Furman was selected as the SoCon's Game of the Year.
From: Cohen, Mark /O=WOFFORD COLLEGE/OU=FIRST ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=COHENM
Subject: SoCon Football Rouser Registration Form
Date: June 17, 2004 at 12:07 PM
To:

Please note the following announcement from the Southern Conference regarding the 2004 Football Rouser to be held in Spartanburg, S.C.

Thanks.

Mark

MEMORANDUM

June 17, 2004

TO: Southern Conference Media Members

FROM: Steve Shutt, Associate Commissioner

SUBJECT: 2004 SoCon Football Rouser

The 2004 Southern Conference Football Rouser is just over a month away. This year we will head to Spartanburg, SC where the brand-new Marriott Renaissance Park will serve as our headquarters. Enclosed with this memorandum is a schedule as well as a lodging and registration form.

As in previous years, we will have all of the SoCon head coaches as well as two student-athletes from each school in attendance.

The Rouser will begin on Sunday, July 25 with a reception at Gerhard’s Cafe, an outstanding Spartanburg restaurant. We will have our annual golf outing on Monday, July 26 at 1 p.m. at The Carolina Country Club followed by a cookout at the course.

We will host a Kickoff Breakfast on Tuesday, July 27 at 8:00 a.m. followed by interview sessions with the coaches and student-athletes starting at 9:30 a.m.

The deadline for reserving lodging is noon on Monday, July 5. With that day being a holiday, you may wish to submit your lodging request prior to Friday, July 2.

We hope to see you at the Rouser! If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to give us a call.

Links:

Gerhard’s Café, 1200 East Main Street, Spartanburg http://www.gerhardsofcafe.com/
Steve Shutt
Associate Commissioner
Southern Conference
905 E. Main. St., Suite 6
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The Sports Network has ranked Wofford's Lee Basinger as the No. 1 defensive tackle in Division I-AA this season with offensive guards Eric Deutsch and Bobby Gibbs, nose tackle Katon Bethay and inside linebacker Timmy Thrift also receiving position rankings.

Basinger topped the Terrier defensive front while placing fifth overall with 90 tackles last season. The senior from Kannapolis, N.C., had 17 stops for a loss, including six sacks, to go with seven quarterback hurries and three fumble recoveries.

Bethay, a junior from Milton, Wis., is listed as the No. 7 defensive tackle in Division I-AA. He topped the Terriers with 20 tackles for a loss and seven sacks in totaling 73 stops. He also forced three fumbles.

Deutsch and Gibbs are listed as the No. 3 and No. 4 offensive guards, respectively. They both earned consensus All-America honors in 2003.

The 6-foot-4, 330-pound Deutsch topped the Terriers with 182 knockdown blocks. He posted a single-season high 33 knockdowns while grading out at 96.3 percent in a dominant performance during the Terriers' 34-17 quarterfinal-round playoff victory over defending national champion Western Kentucky. Deutsch (Cincinnati, Ohio) was the 2003 recipient of the SoCon's Jacobs Blocking Trophy as the league's top offensive lineman.

Gibbs, a Corbin, Ky., native, placed second on the Terriers with 152 knockdown blocks. His season-best total of 23 knockdowns also came in the win over Western Kentucky.

Thrift is listed as the No. 17 linebacker in Division I-AA. The senior from Hilliard, Fla., totaled 123 tackles last season to place second on the Terriers behind only graduated consensus All-America Matt Nelson. Thrift forced four fumbles on the year while also returning an interception 100 yards for a touchdown in a 42-14 win at Chattanooga.

The defending SoCon champion Terriers open the 2004 campaign Sept. 11 at South Carolina State.
Tony Moss, executive director of I-AA football for The Sports Network, has Wofford at No. 6 in his unofficial 2004 preseason poll.

Moss makes reference to Wofford having the top offensive and defensive lines in the Southern Conference.

The defending SoCon champion Terriers return 15 starters and 43 of 55 lettermen from last year's squad that posted a 12-2 overall record and 8-0 league mark in advancing to the Division I-AA national semifinals.

Wofford, which reports to campus Aug. 17 for the start of preseason drills, opens the 2004 campaign on Sept. 11 at South Carolina State. Kickoff is 7 p.m. in Orangeburg.
Offensive guard Bobby Gibbs and inside linebacker Timmy Thrift of defending SoCon champion Wofford have received first-team preseason All-America honors from Lindy's 2004 National College Football.

The Terriers are ranked seventh in the preseason Top 25 poll by the magazine.

Wofford was previously ranked second by Athlon and ninth by Street & Smith's in other preseason publications.
The Sports Network has selected Wofford defensive lineman Lee Basinger as a first-team preseason All-America with offensive guards Eric Deutsch and Bobby Gibbs receiving second-team accolades.

Basinger is the only SoCon player selected to the first team while defending SoCon champion Wofford tops all league members with its three preseason All-Americas.

A senior from Kannapolis, N.C., Basinger has also been ranked by The Sports Network as the nation's top defensive tackle in Division I-AA. He topped the Wofford defensive front with 90 stops last season, including 17 for a loss. He had six sacks, seven quarterback hurries and three fumble recoveries.

Basinger earned All-SoCon honors from the league coaches and media and was named Wofford's Defensive Lineman of the Year in 2003. He set a Terrier single-game record with six tackles for a loss, including three sacks, in the 31-10 first-round playoff win over North Carolina A&T.

Deutsch was a consensus first-team All-America last season in addition to receiving the SoCon's Jacobs Blocking Trophy as the league's top offensive lineman.

The fifth-year senior from Cincinnati, Ohio, led Wofford with 182 knockdown blocks. He received Terrier Offensive Player of the Week honors with a dominating performance in the 34-17 quarterfinal-round playoff win over defending national champion Western Kentucky. Deutsch had a career-high 33 knockdowns while grading out at 96.3 percent.

Gibbs, also a first-team All-America in 2003, placed second on the Terriers with 152 knockdown blocks. He's a consensus preseason All-America this fall. The Corbin, Ky., native posted a career-best 23 knockdowns with a 95.4 grade in the postseason victory over Western Kentucky.

Deutsch and Gibbs are ranked third and fourth, respectively, among offensive guards in Division I-AA by The Sports Network.

The Terriers open the 2004 campaign on Sept. 11 at South Carolina State.
The 2004 Wofford College football team will look to continue the momentum from last year’s Southern Conference championship and trip to the Division I-AA national semifinals.

Over the last two seasons, Wofford is the SoCon’s winningest team with a 21-5 (.808) overall record and 14-2 (.875) league mark.

Mike Ayers, Wofford’s all-time winningest coach with 102 victories, will be in his 17th year on the Terrier sideline. He was the 2003 recipient of The Sports Network’s Eddie Robinson Award as Division I-AA’s National Coach of the Year. Ayers was the runner-up in 2002. He has also been named SoCon Coach of the Year three times in the last four seasons.

The Terriers welcome back 15 starters and 43 of 55 lettermen from last year’s squad that became the first SoCon team to go undefeated in league play since 1998. Wofford climbed as high as No. 2 in the national polls before closing the campaign ranked third with a 12-2 overall record and 8-0 SoCon mark. The 12 wins set a new single-season Wofford standard.

The Terriers have posted victories in each of the last two seasons over Georgia Southern and Appalachian State. Wofford also became the first team since 1992 to hold Furman without a touchdown at home with last year’s 7-6 win in Greenville, S.C.

Wofford returns a pair of first-team All-America offensive guards in Eric Deutsch and Bobby Gibbs. Deutsch was also the recipient of the 2003 SoCon Jacobs Blocking Trophy as the league’s top offensive lineman.

The Terriers’ quarterback duo of Jeff Zolman and Trey Rodgers is also back after combining for 982 yards rushing and 13 touchdowns a year ago. They also completed 53.9 percent of their pass attempts.

2003 SoCon Freshman of the Year Kevious Johnson topped Wofford in rushing with 823 yards and nine touchdowns on a 6.0 per carry mark. He will move from halfback to fullback this season. It is a position switch he made last fall when he rushed for 81 yards and scored all three Terrier touchdowns in the 20-14 win over Georgia Southern.

Wofford will again feature a potent wingbone attack. The Terriers averaged 258.3 yards per game on the ground a year ago.

The Terriers return seven starters on their defensive unit, including 2003 All-SoCon selections Lee Basinger and Katon Bethay on the defensive line and Timmy Thrift at inside linebacker.

The Wofford defense led the nation in turnover margin (+23) and turnovers gained (41) while topping the SoCon in scoring defense for league games only (11.4 ppg.). The 91 points surrendered by the Terriers represented the lowest total in the league since 1988. Wofford placed third nationally in scoring defense for overall contests (14.8 ppg.).
Wofford will have six home games at Gibbs Stadium for the second straight season. The 2004 campaign opens Sept. 11 at South Carolina State. Following a Sept. 18 trip to Georgia Southern, the Terriers will be home for six of their final nine contests.

Quarterback

The Terriers’ quarterback tandem of Jeff Zolman (6-1, 190, Sr.) and Trey Rodgers (6-0, 185, Sr.) is seasoned.

The duo shared the snaps last year with both players having their share of success. Rodgers spearheaded the comeback against Georgia Southern by directing a pair of fourth-quarter scoring drives in the 20-14 win, while Zolman rushed for 235 yards and five touchdowns in Wofford’s two playoff victories.

Zolman and Rodgers are clones of each other. Their competition in practice, in which they grade out nearly identical, pushes them to get better. They run well while also having the ability to throw the ball.

Zolman and Rodgers are tough and intelligent with a great understanding of the Terrier offense.

A native of Dayton, Ohio, Zolman placed third on last year’s team with 607 yards rushing and nine touchdowns on a 4.7 per carry average. The southpaw also completed 58.5 percent of his passes. He is Wofford’s career leader in completion percentage (57.5).

A local player from Dorman High School in Spartanburg, S.C., Rodgers was the Terriers’ fourth-leading rusher with 375 yards (4.3 avg.) and four touchdowns. He passed for four additional scores while connecting on 50.0 percent of his attempts.

Josh Collier (6-2, 180, So.) is a talented young signal caller who will push for playing time. The Terrier coaches would love to get him game experience as he prepares to take over the starting quarterback duties in 2005.

Collier has outstanding size. He will stand in the pocket and throw the football while also doing a nice job of reading the option. The Bonnaire, Ga., native has been exceptional since arriving on campus last fall.

Newcomer Joey Bryant (6-0, 185, Fr.) is another Terrier quarterback of the future. He hails from Glen Este High School in Cincinnati, Ohio, the alma mater of Wofford coach Mike Ayers.

Running Back

Led by 2003 SoCon Freshman of the Year and Walter Payton Award candidate Kevious Johnson (5-9, 180, So.), Wofford will return a solid backfield for 2004.
Johnson (5-9, 180, So.), Wofford returns all but one of its backs from last season.

With the graduation of Wofford student body president and All-SoCon fullback J.R. McNair, Johnson will move to fullback this fall. He is no stranger to the position. While filling in for an injured McNair in last season’s 20-14 win over Georgia Southern, Johnson rushed for 81 yards while scoring all three Terrier touchdowns. His 24-yard scoring reception with 1:47 to play provided the winning points.

Johnson topped Wofford with 823 yards and nine touchdowns on a 6.0 per carry mark. He has all the attributes of a great back, including a tremendous amount of speed and power. While slated for the starting fullback job, he could also see action at halfback.

Mike Jones (5-10, 195, Sr.) and Jeff Sullivan (5-9, 205, Sr.) are veterans vying for time behind Johnson at fullback.

Jones, hampered by injury in 2003, had a tremendous spring. He has increased his size and speed and will look to put himself in the mix this fall. Sullivan has been in the system for three years and understands the Terrier offense. He has good strength and quick feet.

The halfback position features interchangeable parts among its top four returnees.

Corey Dunn (5-11, 205, Jr.) and Gabriel Jackson (5-9, 185, Jr.) came out of the spring with starting jobs.

Dunn rushed for 333 yards (5.1 avg.) in 2003, including an outstanding game of 68 yards on nine carries in the 20-14 win over Georgia Southern. The Lexington, Ky., native is a big and aggressive back. He came on strong during the Terriers’ playoff run.

Jackson offers a tremendous amount of speed on the edge. He also has the ability to catch the ball out of the backfield. He ran for 228 yards on a 4.1 per carry mark last season. As a freshman in 2002, his 61-yard touchdown run with 1:36 to play provided Wofford with the winning touchdown in its 26-19 win at Appalachian State.

Aaron Johnson (5-10, 185, Jr.) and Terrance Ware (5-9, 180, So.) will push for first-team jobs as well.

Johnson has been a part-time starter in each of his first two seasons. He has been a tremendous player from a blocking standpoint and can do a lot of things on the field. The Bowling Green, Ky., native rushed for 92 yards in the 28-3 win over Catawba last year.

Ware has a powerful and elusive running style. He increased his size and strength in the offseason by competing for the Wofford track and field team.

Wide Receiver

With the depth at halfback, Ben Mungin (5-9, 185, Sr.) has been moved to wide receiver.
A starter much of the last two seasons in the backfield, Mungin is an experienced and valuable member of the Terrier offense. An outstanding blocker, he earned Wofford Offensive Player of the Week honors in the 42-14 win at Chattanooga that saw J.R. McNair run for five touchdowns.

Mungin is extremely tough-minded and will catch anything that is close to him. He runs great routes and had four receptions for 51 yards a year ago.

Brian Rice (5-10, 190, Sr.) is the Terriers’ top returning receiver with six catches, including an 11-yard touchdown in the semifinal-round playoff game at Delaware.

Rice has been a consistent performer and good blocker who always seems to get open. The Spring Hope, N.C., native made some eye-opening catches in the spring.

Matt Beavin (5-10, 170, So.) and Brandon Berry (5-8, 160, So.) saw significant action as freshmen last season.

Beavin was also utilized on kickoff returns before tearing his ACL midway through the campaign. He has worked extremely hard to return to action this fall.

Berry came on very strong at the close of the season and had a key reception and carry on a reverse at Delaware. He was a playmaker in the spring as he showed tremendous improvement. The Knoxville, Tenn., native is also a physical receiver for his size.

David LaBorde (6-3, 215, So.) and Colby Harris (5-10, 165, So.) also figure into the mix. LaBorde is a converted quarterback and the tall receiver the Terriers have long coveted. Harris had a good spring and is known for making the tough catch. He also runs well and can be difficult to tackle in space.

**Tight End**

Under the tutelage of Wofford president emeritus Joe Lesesne, the Terriers go three-deep with returnees at tight end. Known for their blocking, the Wofford tight ends had two of their three receptions last year result in touchdowns.

Adam Regenthal (6-3, 242, Sr.) is a returning starter and All-SoCon candidate. He has outstanding hands and is an excellent blocker who plays with great leverage. The Terrier coaches are constantly trying to find ways to get the ball to him.

One of the surprises of the spring was Matt Allison (6-2, 225, Sr.). Moved from inside linebacker to tight end, Allison is extremely physical and very tough. He did a great job with his blocking and will push for a starting job. He has outstanding hands and is deceptively fast.

Cody Garland (6-4, 255, Jr.) is the third tight end. He had a key touchdown reception on a fake field goal in last year’s 24-14 win over Appalachian State.
Offensive Line

The Terriers’ offensive line is arguably the best in the nation with a pair of returning first-team All-Americans in guards Eric Deutsch (6-4, 330, Sr.) and Bobby Gibbs (6-3, 295, Sr.).

Deutsch, the 2003 SoCon Jacobs Blocking Trophy recipient, returns for a fifth season of eligibility at right guard. He earned All-SoCon honors for the second time last year in addition to his consensus All-America accolade.

A Cincinnati, Ohio, native, Deutsch sat out spring drills while recuperating from offseason shoulder surgery. He is a dominating presence, evidenced by his 33 knockdown blocks in last year’s 34-17 quarterfinal-round playoff victory over Western Kentucky. For the season, he led the Terriers with 182 knockdowns.

Deutsch is big and physical. He is also the smartest Wofford lineman in regards to assignments. He is an outstanding leader by example with his work ethic and tough-minded nature on the field.

Gibbs missed most of the spring due to injury. Like Deutsch, he’ll be ready to go by the start of preseason camp. The Corbin, Ky., native is a tough, physical player who also received consensus All-America honors in 2003.

Gibbs placed second behind Deutsch with his 152 knockdown blocks. Wofford players look up to Gibbs because of his hard work. He is not afraid to get after an opponent and put him on his back.

Center Brad Anderson (6-2, 285, Jr.) and right tackle Kevin Hodapp (6-3, 280, Sr.) are the other returning starters on the Terrier offensive line. Both will contend for All-SoCon honors in 2004.

Anderson is one of the stronger linemen on the team and an outstanding competitor. He totaled 142 knockdown blocks last season, including a career-best 25 in the win over East Tennessee State which clinched the outright SoCon title for Wofford.

Hodapp was the Terriers’ Offensive Player of the Week twice in a four-game span with outstanding efforts in wins over Elon and The Citadel. Another native of Cincinnati, Ohio, he is extremely athletic with a great understanding of the Terrier offense. He is smart and physical with his play defined by consistency.

The starting left tackle position will be contested between Davy Olmsted (6-4, 295, Jr.) and Brad Birrenkott (6-5, 280, Jr.). Both lettered in reserve roles last season.

Olmsted is very quick, strong and athletic. He runs well and has the ability to get downfield and block at the second and third levels. Birrenkott is an extremely aggressive player and one of the more athletic linemen.
Marty Bauer (6-2, 290, So.) played a lot of snaps in an outstanding freshman campaign in 2003. He topped all Wofford rookie linemen with 53 knockdown blocks as he made two starts, including a 13-knockdown performance in the win at Furman.

A projected future All-SoCon selection, Bauer brings a lot to the table with his ability and toughness. Hailing from Cincinnati, Ohio, he is a fierce competitor who will see significant playing time at either guard position or center.

Derek Tiller (6-0, 275, So.) is another young and promising lineman. He is expected to back up Deutsch at right guard. Tiller is a tenacious player who simply loves football and enjoys being around the game. He is a tough, hard-working player.

Veterans Thad Ball (6-3, 275, Sr.) and Tim Beckner (6-3, 275, Jr.) will fill second-team roles at center and right tackle, respectively.

Ball also has the potential to play at tackle. He is an intelligent and scrappy player who adds needed depth to the line. Beckner was moved from guard to tackle to better utilize his athleticism.

Guard Travis Andrews (6-2, 270, So.) and tackle Will Rutherford (6-5, 260, So.) are other returning linemen in the mix for playing time.

Defensive Line

The Terrier defensive front is a major strength with returning All-SoCon linemen Lee Basinger (6-1, 255, Sr.) and Katon Bethay (6-2, 285, Jr.).

Basinger is a fixture on the right side of the line. The Sports Network tabbed him as the No. 1 defensive tackle in Division I-AA, while another college football web site listed him as the preseason SoCon Defensive Player of the Year.

Arguably the top defensive lineman in Wofford history, Basinger is on pace to become the Terriers’ career leader in tackles for a loss. He led the defensive front with 90 stops last season with 17 coming behind the line of scrimmage.

A native of Kannapolis, N.C., he posted six sacks, seven quarterback hurries and three fumble recoveries. He had a single-game school record six tackles for a loss, including three sacks, in last year’s 31-10 first-round playoff win over North Carolina A&T.

Wofford defensive line coach Jack Teachey has referred to Basinger as the most consistent player he has ever coached. Basinger has a great work ethic and attitude to go with his toughness. He is a tremendous player.

Bethay will be in his second year as the starting nose tackle. Despite playing with two injured knees, he had a great year in earning All-SoCon honors from the league coaches and media. The native of Milton, Wis., is big and strong. He also possesses the finesse and athletic ability to do unprecedented things for the Terrier defense.
Bethay is the best true pass rusher on the team. He received Wofford Defensive Player of the Week honors when he totaled five tackles for a loss in last year’s 7-6 win at Furman. He topped the Terriers with his season totals of 20 stops behind the line of scrimmage and seven sacks.

Ben Whitney (6-3, 260, Sr.) is the projected starter at left end. A shoulder injury kept him out of spring practice.

Whitney has shown steady improvement each season in developing into an outstanding player. He was the Terriers’ Defensive Player of the Week in last year’s 38-6 win at Western Carolina. He also came up big with four tackles for a loss, a sack and a forced fumble in the triumph over Furman.

A Greensboro, N.C., native, Whitney strives for perfection and is one of the true team leaders. Eleven of his 40 stops on the year were for negative yards, including four sacks.

Bill Pryor (6-2, 250, Sr.) had arguably the best spring of any defensive lineman and will push Whitney for the first-team job at left end. A fifth-year senior, Pryor is a pass rushing specialist who has worked extremely hard to elevate his game.

Erik Hutchinson (5-11, 240, Sr.) moved from linebacker to the defensive line in preseason camp last year. He specializes in the pass rush. He graded out very well during spring drills and is in a second-team position behind Basinger on the right side. He is an effort guy who tallied four sacks in 2003.

Bryan Blair (5-9, 265, So.) and Gaby Dibo (6-0, 284, Jr.) back up Bethay at nose tackle. Blair came out of the spring in the No. 2 position. The walk-on makes up for his lack of size with tremendous heart. He is extremely quick and brings a different dimension to the nose tackle spot. Injuries to Bethay and Dibo in last year’s season opener at Air Force forced Blair into immediate action. He had a fumble recovery the next week in the 35-13 win over South Carolina State.

Dibo is making progress each season and has seen extensive game action. His continued development is key to the defensive front.

Josh Dorr (6-1, 250, So.) and James Drury (6-0, 250, So.) are young linemen who missed last season due to injuries. They both have promising futures.

Linebacker

The Terriers return three of their four starting linebackers from a year ago.

Wofford goes a solid two-deep at the inside positions with talented performers in Timmy Thrift (6-0, 220, Sr.), Jim Thurman (6-2, 225, Jr.), Josh Smith (6-1, 215, Sr.) and Justin Franklin (6-2, 220, So.).
Thrift earned All-SoCon accolades in 2003 as he placed second on the Terriers with 123 tackles. He is on pace to rank as one of the top linebackers to ever play at Wofford. With 199 stops in three seasons, he could close his career as high as third on the Terriers’ all-time tackles chart.

Thrift (Hilliard, Fla.) is a big playmaker with exceptional speed. He caused four fumbles last season and returned an interception 100 yards for a touchdown at Chattanooga. He is capable of 150 tackles in a season. Thrift was injury-free for the first time last year and was finally able to showcase his ability.

Thurman placed third on the Terriers with 109 stops. He is a steady performer who does a great job in the tackle box. The Hixson, Tenn., native has shown steady improvement each season, beginning with his freshman year when he recorded a team-high three fumble recoveries. He had three interceptions in a two-week stretch in 2003.

Smith started against Furman last year and came up with the key defensive play as he made the tackle for a loss on a Paladin fourth-down attempt that set up Wofford’s decisive touchdown in the 7-6 win. He was also outstanding in the semifinal-round playoff game at Delaware in which he recorded a key interception.

The Greer, S.C., native carries the highest grade-point average on the Terriers while majoring in biology. He is one of the more physical players on the defense, excelling when the opponent is trying to play a power style of football. Smith’s study habits give him every opportunity to be as good as he possibly can.

Franklin topped all Wofford freshmen with 43 tackles. He has good size, outstanding speed and an eye for the football. His speed allows him to make plays on the perimeter similar to Thrift. If Franklin continues his rapid improvement, it will be hard to keep him off the field.

Brandon Smith (5-11, 210, Sr.) is a veteran on the inside who excels in passing situations. He is also a significant contributor on special teams. As the holder, he threw a key touchdown pass on a fake field goal in the 24-14 win over Appalachian State.

Jimmy Freeland (5-11, 220, Sr.) is a returning starter at outside linebacker and coming off a great season. A native of Cincinnati, Ohio, he placed sixth on the team with 89 tackles, including 13 for a loss. He also had four sacks, six pass breakups, three quarterback hurries, two forced fumbles and an interception that helped seal the victory versus Appalachian State.

Freeland has made a lot of big plays in his Terrier career and has been an outstanding tackler in open space. He has become a physical player with a great understanding of the defense. Freeland’s leadership extends to a teaching role for the younger players. The Wofford coaches are looking for another big year from him as he is now a staple of the Terrier defense.

Derek Newberry (6-3, 218, Jr.) will be the starter at the other outside linebacker position.
Newberry is a converted safety who received quality game experience in a backup role to All-SoCon performer Teddie Whitaker last season. Newberry had an outstanding spring and is very athletic which enables him to be a great pass rusher. Last season, he returned an interception 81 yards in the 38-6 win at Western Carolina.

Steve Hoover (6-1, 210, Sr.) and Andrew Nelson (5-11, 215, Sr.) are veterans in second-team roles at outside linebacker.

Hoover made a lot of strides this spring and is an exceptional special teams player. He has a lot of speed and can be a good pass rusher. Nelson also showed improvement in the spring. He understands the defense and could give the Terriers some quality snaps.

Kyle Horne (6-2, 195, So.) is a promising young player who did not see game action last season. He has been moved from safety to outside linebacker.

Secondary

Strong safety Ryan Steele (6-1, 200, Sr.) and left cornerback Dedrick Stuckey (5-10, 180, Jr.) are the returning starters from a unit that will look to replace graduated consensus All-America and SoCon Male Athlete of the Year Matt Nelson.

As a fifth-year senior, Steele will be the veteran leader of the defensive backs while contending for postseason honors. The York, S.C., native had a great year in 2003 as he placed fourth on the Terriers with 107 tackles. His nine pass breakups were second on the squad. He also had a key interception to help preserve the 7-6 win at Furman. Steele is an outstanding tackler and extremely physical. He enters his second season in the starting lineup.

Fellow fifth-year senior Shane Fast (6-1, 195, Sr.) will backup Steele at strong safety. Fast has a strong work ethic and has made an outstanding contribution on the special teams as a three-year letterman.

Stuckey started the final eight games last season and is an outstanding athlete with a 39-inch vertical leap. He possesses very good ball skills and is extremely physical. Stuckey has the ability to be an All-SoCon player after demonstrating a consistent level of play in 2003.

Converted cornerbacks Alex Love (5-11, 180, Jr.) and Shaun Bennett (6-0, 185, Sr.) are the top candidates to start at Nelson’s vacated free safety position.

Love is extremely athletic with great ball skills. He has outstanding instincts in going to the football. His big-play ability was seen on the special teams with a pair of blocked kicks. Love also had a key interception and 47-yard return to seal last year’s 34-17 quarterfinal-round playoff win over Western Kentucky.

Bennett was arguably the most improved player in the secondary coming out of the spring. He will challenge Love for the starting job at free safety. Bennett has also been a special...
He will challenge Love for the starting job at free safety. Bennett has also been a special teams standout.

Brian Kemp (5-11, 175, So.) came out of the spring as a top candidate to start at right cornerback.

Kemp has the best hands in the secondary. He is extremely athletic and physical. Kemp is also expected to contribute on special teams as a return specialist or punt rusher. The Wofford coaches expect Kemp, a fluid athlete, to make a name for himself as a playmaker this fall.

Jonathan Wheeler (6-2, 190, Sr.) and Tony Jefferson (5-11, 192, Sr.) are veterans who will add needed depth at the cornerback and free safety positions, respectively. Wheeler started six games last season.

Special Teams

While Nick Robinson (5-10, 180, So.) returns at placekicker, the Terriers will look to rookie Josh Syria (6-3, 230, Fr.) to handle the punting duties.

Four-time All-SoCon selection Jimmy Miner graduated and became the second straight Wofford punter to sign a National Football League contract.

Robinson was one of the great stories on last year’s Terrier squad. He had never played football until deciding to walk-on just prior to the start of preseason camp.

The Deland, Fla., native tied a single-season Wofford record with 48 extra-points made, including 46 in a row to open the campaign. He was 5-of-8 on field-goal attempts. His season-long 40-yard effort came on the final play of the first half to forge a 3-3 halftime tie with Delaware in the national semifinals.

Robinson had a very good spring as he increased his strength. He has been a model of consistency in his short time on the gridiron.

Syria comes to the Terriers from Wenatchee High School in Wenatchee, Wash. He averaged 40.0 yards per attempt as a senior last fall.

Newcomers Ryan Hoover (5-10, 165, Fr.) and Patrick Mugan (5-10, 170, Fr.) will challenge Robinson for the kickoff duties.

With the graduation of four-year standout Jonathan Starks at long snapper, Greg German (6-3, 225, So.) and newcomer Chris Collins (6-2, 250, Fr.) will contend for the starting job at the unheralded but very important position. Starks did not have a bad snap in his Terrier career.

Wofford has always taken pride in its special teams and last year was a prime example. The Terriers blocked six kicks, including three by Shaun Bennett (6-0, 185, Sr.) and two by Alex
Terriers blocked six kicks, including three by Shaun Bennett (6-0, 185, Sr.) and two by Alex Love (5-11, 180, Jr.), while again ranking among the national leaders in net punting.

Steve Hoover (6-1, 210, Sr.) would be a strong contender for All-SoCon honors if the league had a spot for special teams players. Hoover earned Wofford Player of the Week honors for his efforts on the punt coverage unit in the 7-6 win at South Carolina State in 2002.

SoCon Freshman of the Year Kevious Johnson (5-9, 180, So.), the Terriers’ leading rusher last season with 823 yards, will again be Wofford’s primary return man. He averaged 19.2 yards on kickoff returns in his rookie campaign.
Nine Wofford football players have received preseason All-SoCon honors from the league's head coaches.

Selected to the first team were center Brad Anderson (Tomball, Texas), defensive end Lee Basinger (Kannapolis, N.C.), nose tackle Katon Bethay (Milton, Wis.) and offensive guard Eric Deutsch (Cincinnati, Ohio).

Representing Wofford on the second team are offensive guard Bobby Gibbs (Corbin, Ky.), running back Kevious Johnson (Fitzgerald, Ga.), placekicker Nick Robinson (Deland, Fla.), strong safety Ryan Steele (York, S.C.) and inside linebacker Timmy Thrift (Hilliard, Fla.).

Deutsch and Gibbs were consensus All-Americans in 2003 with Deutsch capturing the SoCon Jacobs Blocking Trophy as the league's top offensive lineman.

Johnson was the 2003 SoCon Freshman of the Year.
The eight SoCon head football coaches as well as the league media have selected defending champion Wofford to place second in the league standings this season.

The Terriers return 15 starters (eight offensive, seven defensive) and 43 of 55 lettermen from last year's squad that posted a 12-2 overall record and 8-0 league mark in capturing the SoCon title and advancing to the national semifinals.

Listed below is the predicted order of finish with first-place votes in parentheses and total points received. Coaches vote for seven teams and do not include their own team in the predicted order of finish. Thirty of the media members who attended the SoCon Rouser participated in the voting.

**Coaches Poll**
1. Furman (5) -- 45
2. Wofford (2) -- 41
3. Georgia Southern (1) -- 39
4. Appalachian State -- 38
5. Western Carolina -- 25
6. The Citadel -- 15
7. Chattanooga -- 14
8. Elon -- 7

**Media Poll**
1. Furman (13) -- 217
2. Wofford (11) -- 199
3. Georgia Southern (6) -- 195
4. Appalachian State -- 167
5. Western Carolina -- 99
6. Chattanooga -- 86
7. The Citadel -- 67
8. Elon -- 50
The defending SoCon champion Wofford football team will make three television appearances in the 2004 season.

The Terriers' Sept. 18 game at Georgia Southern will be seen on FOX Sports Net South. Kickoff is 7:30 p.m. in Statesboro, Ga.

College Sports Television (CSTV) will air Wofford's Oct. 23 contest at Appalachian State as well as the Nov. 13 home date versus Furman.

Kickoff is 3 p.m. in Boone, N.C., against the Mountaineers. The Terriers' Gibbs Stadium meeting with the Paladins has been changed to a 1 p.m. start from the original 1:30 p.m. kickoff.
On having the SoCon's best record over the last two seasons (14-2 in the league and 21-5 overall) ...

"We are proud of that. It's happened because of a lot of hard work. We've had a great group of guys who are willing to make the commitment to get it done. We've also had a staff that's done a fabulous job the last two years. We've been very blessed as a football team to stay healthy and very fortunate. The league we play in is as tough as any in the country. If you're successful in the Southern Conference, you've accomplished something."

On the goal for the 2004 season after capturing the SoCon championship and advancing to the national semifinals last year ...

"Our goal and vision for this season is just like last year. We're going to do our best to win a Southern Conference championship and get into the national playoffs and win a national championship. We have a team coming back that we feel very good about. We lost 12 quality players. In that 12, there were some great players but we have a great nucleus coming back."

What are question marks for the coming season?

"The big question will be at the free safety position and the inexperience in the kicking game."

The outlook for this year's team ...

"We feel that with the guys coming back, if the offseason and spring practice are any indicator, we'll have an opportunity to succeed. The kids have worked extremely hard. We've worked hard this summer in preparation to hopefully be better coaches for our guys when they report. It's all going to be decided when they come in and go through those 29 practice opportunities. We'll have an indication of the type of commitment they've been willing to make. With that commitment is a direct correlation with success. If they're in great shape and ready to work hard, we'll have a chance to win. If they haven't made the commitment, read the press clippings and are still on last year, we'll be in trouble. We have a group that I believe are mature kids. They're focused and understand the realistic challenge that is out there in the Southern Conference. We feel that we'll have a chance to get it done."

On replacing graduated free safety Matt Nelson ...

"Matt Nelson was the SoCon Male Student-Athlete of the Year, the SoCon Defensive Player of the Year and a consensus All-American. He was the glue that held those guys together."
of the Year and a consensus All-America. He was the glue that held those guys together back there. That's a big part of our defense and a big question we have right now. We have two guys that have a great deal of ability but neither one, quite frankly, was consistent enough in spring ball. Hopefully, after we go through summer practice, we'll find that consistent guy to replace Matt. If we do that, then I think we have a chance to have a great defense. We have a front seven coming back that's as strong as we've ever had and there's some tremendous leadership in that group. There are kids with a great deal of work ethic and want-to. They are guys that when you get out there and start knocking folks around on the field, they get after it as well as anybody."

On the Terriers' returning quarterback tandem of seniors Jeff Zolman and Trey Rodgers ...

"We have two excellent players who can lead our team. They are special guys to be able to handle the situation when you're rotating them. The great thing that we had last year was the ability to play both. If one was struggling a bit, the guy that came in seemed to pick us up. Both of them are mature enough to understand that it was best for the football team to do it that way. There's no doubt each one wanted to be the starter but we felt that if one guy had been in there slugging it out for 14 games, he wouldn't have lasted all year. We rotated quarterbacks, therefore we had two healthy quarterbacks the whole year. It was a big part of our success in winning the Southern Conference championship and going to the national semifinals."

On the high expectations of Wofford football ...

"Everybody on the outside has high expectations and we have the same viewpoint. We believe that we can compete for a championship and it's going to come down to us working and doing the things that good football teams do. We've got an opportunity to succeed and if we have the same mindset and work ethic as last year, I think it can happen."
CollegeSportsReport.com has tabbed the defending Southern Conference football champion Wofford Terriers as the No. 1 team in Division I-AA this season.

Wofford reports Aug. 16 for the start of preseason camp. Practice begins Aug. 18 with the season opener Sept. 11 at South Carolina State.

The Terriers return 15 starters (eight offensive, seven defensive) and 43 of 55 lettermen from last year's squad that posted a 12-2 overall record and 8-0 league mark in capturing the SoCon title and advancing to the national semifinals.

The complete CollegeSportsReport.com poll can be accessed at:
http://www.dopke.com/IAARankings04.htm
Wofford's Mike Ayers has been selected by American Football Monthly as a "hot" coach to watch in the 2004 season.

AFM refers to its list as a complete and comprehensive review of coaches that will be scrutinized and analyzed throughout the fall but are considered the cream of the crop.

“Our research staff looked at coaches at all levels of competition from high school through the NFL,” AFM managing editor Rex Lardner said. “We believe this listing includes the top coaches at all levels that are either ready for a breakout year, poised to move up the ranks or continuing a successful tradition.”

Ayers was the 2003 recipient of the Eddie Robinson Award as Division I-AA's National Coach of the Year. He was the runner-up in 2002.

Wofford's all-time winningest coach with 102 victories, Ayers has received SoCon Coach of the Year honors three times in the last four seasons. He has also been the American Football Coaches Association Region Coach of the Year in each of the last two campaigns and four times in his 16-year Wofford tenure.

Under Ayers, the Terriers are the SoCon's winningest football team over the last two seasons with a 14-2 SoCon record and 21-5 overall mark.

The complete list can be accessed next week at: www.americanfootballmonthly.com
Wofford offensive guards Eric Deutsch and Bobby Gibbs as well as defensive end Lee Basinger are first-team preseason All-America selections by CollegeSportsReport.com with nose tackle Katon Bethey receiving special mention on defense.

Deutsch (6-4, 330, Sr.) and Gibbs (6-3, 295, Sr.), 2003 consensus All-Americans, are two of eight returning starters on offense for the SoCon's winningest team (21-5 overall, 14-2 league) over the last two seasons.

A senior from Cincinnati, Ohio, Deutsch topped Wofford last year with 182 knockdown blocks in receiving the SoCon's Jacobs Blocking Trophy as the league's top offensive lineman. Gibbs, from Corbin, Ky., placed second on the Terriers with 152 knockdowns.

Basinger (6-1, 255, Sr.) has been tabbed by The Sports Network as the nation's top defensive lineman in Division I-AA this season. He topped the Wofford defensive front in 2003 with 90 total tackles, including 17 for a loss. The Kannapolis, N.C., native also had six sacks while recovering three fumbles.

Bethay (6-2, 285, Jr.) hails from Milton, Wis. He led the Terriers with 20 stops for a loss and seven sacks a year ago.