

# Big South

The Big South Conference held its Media Day Tuesday, with Monmouth projected in a vote of league head coaches and media to repeat as conference champions.

The Hawks went 3-1 (3-0 Big South) in an abbreviated spring 2021 campaign to claim the league crown. Fourth-ranked — and eventual national champion — Sam Houston State clipped Monmouth, 21-15, in a first-round playoff contest in Huntsville, Texas. Monmouth carries a 10-game Big South win streak into the 2021 season — the fourth- longest in conference history.

Kennesaw State was second in the 2021 preseason balloting with 117 points and received one first-place vote. New Big South member North Carolina A&T claimed third-place in the poll with 100 points, while Charleston Southern was fourth with 85 points and received the remaining first-place nod. Campbell was predicted fifth in the preseason ranking with 82 points, while Gardner-Webb landed in the sixth position (59 points). Hampton claimed seventh-place (35 points) and Robert Morris landed in the final spot with 29 points.

Associate member North Alabama is not eligible for the preseason ranking again this year as part of its transition to Division I, as the Lions are not eligible for the Big South regular-season championship nor the FCS Playoffs during their transition period.

## 2021 PRESEASON FOOTBALL POLL

### Rank – School (first-place votes) Points

1 – Monmouth (16)	141
2 – Kennesaw State (1)	117
3 – North Carolina A&T	100
4 – Charleston Southern (1)	85
5 – Campbell	82
6 – Gardner-Webb	59
7 – Hampton	35
8 – Robert Morris	29

*Note: points are based on a weighted system, with first-place votes receiving 8 points, followed by 7 points for second-place, and so on.*

## BIG SOUTH ALL-CONFERENCE TEAMS ANNOUNCED

Monmouth redshirt-junior running back **Juwon Farri** (Gaithersburg, Md.) and Hawks' redshirt-senior defensive back **Anthony Budd** (Riverdale, Md.) have been voted the Big South

Conference's 2021 Preseason Offensive and Defensive Players of the Year, respectively, by the league's head football coaches and media panel, it was announced today.

Farri is the first running back to earn the league's top preseason offensive honor since 2016 and seventh overall. He was the league's Offensive Player of the Year for the 2021 Spring season, and also received All-America accolades from STATS Perform (2nd Team), AFCA (2nd Team) and Phil Steele Magazine (3rd Team). Farri, who tied for eighth in the voting for last year's Walter Payton Award, was a three-time Big South Offensive Player of the Week honoree last spring in which he ranked first in the nation in scoring with 15.0 points scored, as well as first in the Big South with 10 touchdowns. He rushed for a league-best 520 yards on 104 carries (5.0 per carry) and averaged 130.0 yards per game, which ranked second in all of FCS. Farri gained a season-high 179 yards against Kennesaw State, rushed for 124 at Gardner-Webb, and opened the year with 119 yards vs. Charleston Southern. He tallied multiple rushing TDs in all three regular-season games, highlighted by four against GWU, and had three scoring runs of 20+ yards. The 2018 Big South Offensive Freshman of the Year, Farri has scored a rushing touchdown in his last six appearances (dating back to 2018), and has scored a TD in 10 of his 15 career games.

Farri received nine first-place votes and 37 total points in the Preseason Offensive Player of the Year voting, ahead of Campbell quarterback **Hajj-Malik Williams** (two first-place votes and 19 points) and Charleston Southern quarterback **Jack Chambers** (three first-place votes and 15 points).

Budd is the first Monmouth player to win the Big South's preseason defensive award, and is the first defensive back to earn the conference's top preseason honor since 2012. He has been the league's interception leader the past two seasons (5 in 2019, 2 in 2020-21) while earning First-Team All-Conference honors both years. Budd was the Hawks' third-leading tackler in the spring season with 26 stops (14 solo) and had three pass break-ups in addition to his two picks. He recorded two tackles-for-loss, registered a career-high 11 tackles and an interception in a win over Gardner-Webb, and helped Monmouth's rush defense finish 13th in the nation, fifth in turnover margin and first in sacks.

He collected six first-place votes and 31 points in the preseason balloting, ahead of Charleston Southern defensive lineman **Shaundre Mims** (five first-place votes and 22 points) and North Carolina A&T linebacker **Kyin Howard** (two first-place votes and 17 points).

Farri and Budd were also voted to the preseason All-Conference First-Team, which is comprised of 12 offensive and defensive positions, plus specialty positions. A preseason Honorable Mention squad features the next highest vote-getters at each position where available. Monmouth has the most preseason selections with 20, followed by Kennesaw State (5), Campbell and North Carolina A&T with four each, Charleston Southern and Gardner-Webb with three apiece, North Alabama (2) and Hampton and Robert Morris with one selection. The 2021 preseason All-Conference team appears below.

## **PRESEASON ALL-CONFERENCE FIRST-TEAM OFFENSE**

QB – Tony Muskett, Soph., Monmouth  
RB – Juwon Farri, R-Jr., Monmouth  
RB – Jah-Maine Martin, R-Sr., North Carolina A&T  
WR – Lonnie Moore IV, Gr., Monmouth  
WR – Terrance Greene Jr., Sr., Monmouth  
WR – Jadakis Bonds, Jr., Hampton  
TE – Gene Scott, R-Sr., Monmouth  
OL – AJ Farris, Gr., Monmouth  
OL – Justin Szuba, Sr., Monmouth  
OL – Jake Lassiter, Gr., Kennesaw State  
OL – Mahmoud Shabana, Gr., Monmouth  
OL – Manny Christian, Gr., Monmouth

### **DEFENSE**

DL – Shaundre Mims, R-Sr., Charleston Southern  
DL – Ty French, Soph., Gardner-Webb  
DL – Jermaine McDaniel, R-Sr., North Carolina A&T  
DL – Kahari Scarlett, Gr., Monmouth  
LB – Da’Quan Grimes, Gr., Monmouth  
LB – Aniello Buzzacco, Sr., Robert Morris  
LB – Eddie Hahn V, Gr., Monmouth  
LB – Kyin Howard, R-Jr., North Carolina A&T  
DB – Anthony Budd, R-Sr., Monmouth  
DB – Cody Cline, Jr., Charleston Southern  
DB – Darion Slade, R-Sr., Campbell  
DB – Justin Terry, R-Sr., Monmouth

### **SPECIAL TEAMS**

PK – Nathan Robertson, Sr., Kennesaw State  
P – Joe Gurley, Gr., North Alabama  
LS – Kent Vines, Sr., Monmouth  
KR – Isaac Foster, Sr., Kennesaw State  
PR – Isaac Foster, Sr., Kennesaw State

### **PRESEASON ALL-CONFERENCE HONORABLE MENTION**

QB – Hajj-Malik Williams, Jr., Campbell  
RB – Isaac Foster, Sr., Kennesaw State (tie)  
RB – Narii Gaither, Jr., Gardner-Webb (tie)  
WR – Korey Banks, R-Sr., North Carolina A&T (tie)  
WR – Dexter Boykin, R-Jr., North Alabama (tie)  
TE – Julian Hill, Sr., Campbell  
OL – Clayton Frady, Soph., Gardner-Webb  
DL – Erik Massey, Gr., Monmouth  
LB – Justice Galloway-Velazquez, R-Jr., Campbell  
DB – Eddie Morales III, Sr., Monmouth  
P – Ryan Kost, Sr., Monmouth

LS – Ethan Ray, Gr., Charleston Southern  
KR – Lonnie Moore IV, Gr., Monmouth  
PR – Eddie Morales III, Sr., Monmouth

**PRESEASON OFFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

Juwon Farri, R-Jr., RB, Monmouth (Gaithersburg, Md.)

**PRESEASON DEFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

Anthony Budd, R-Sr., DB, Monmouth (Riverdale, Md.)