

WAC Conference

DENVER – With college football returning to the Western Athletic Conference for the first time since 2012, defending national champion Sam Houston is the favorite to win the 2021 WAC title while Bearkats quarterback Eric Schmid and defensive lineman Jahari Kay were selected WAC Preseason Offensive and Defensive Players of the Year, respectively, in a vote of the league's six head coaches, who could not vote for their own team or players.

Schmid led the Preseason All-WAC Offense and is joined by teammates Ramon Jefferson, Jequez Ezzard, Isaac Schley, Eleasah Anderson, Prince Pines and Colby Thomas. Stephen F. Austin was represented by Xavier Gipson and Zach Ingram while Tarleton earned honors from Tariq Bitson and Zachary Perry. Dixie State running back Quali Conley earned the final offensive spot.

On defense, Kay was joined by teammates Trace Mascorro, Joseph Wallace, Quentin Brown, Trevor Williams, Zyon McCollum and Jaylen Thomas. SFA's Brandon Thompson Jr. and Brevin Randle were recognized, as was Tarleton duo Ronnell Wilson and Devin Hafford. Lamar's Anthony Ruffin represented the Cardinals in the preseason awards.

On special teams, Sam Houston kicker Seth Morgan and punter Matt McRobert were recognized and Ezzard earned the spot reserved for kick returner.

Sam Houston earned all five possible first place votes to earn 20 points. Stephen F. Austin earned the final first place votes and 16 points to earn second place. Tarleton is picked third with 11 points, followed by Lamar and Abilene Christian. Dixie State, who will be eligible for all individual awards, will not be playing a full WAC schedule due to previous non-conference game contracts.

The 2021 season begins on Sep. 2 with preseason favorite Sam Houston traveling to Northern Arizona.

2021 Preseason Football Coaches Poll

Rank	Team (1st Place)	Points
1.	Sam Houston (5)	20
2.	Stephen F. Austin (1)	16
3.	Tarleton	11
4.	Lamar	8
5.	Abilene Christian	6

2021 Preseason Offensive Player of the Year: Eric Schmid, Jr., QB, Sam Houston

2021 Preseason Defensive Player of the Year: Jahari Kay, Sr., DL, Sam Houston

2021 Preseason All-WAC Offense

QB - Eric Schmid, Jr., Sam Houston

RB - Quali Conley, Fr., Dixie State

RB - Ramon Jefferson, Jr., Sam Houston

WR - Tariq Bitson, Gr., Tarleton

WR - Jequez Ezzard, Gr., Sam Houston
WR - Xavier Gipson, So., Stephen F. Austin
TE - Isaac Schley, Gr., Sam Houston
OL - Eleasah Anderson, Jr., Sam Houston
OL - Zach Ingram, Sr., Stephen F. Austin
OL - Zachary Perry, Sr., Tarleton
OL - Prince Pines, So., Sam Houston
OL - Colby Thomas, Sr., Sam Houston

2021 Preseason All-WAC Defense

DL - Jahari Kay, Sr., Sam Houston
DL - Trace Mascorro, Sr., Sam Houston
DL - Brandon Thompson Jr., Jr., Stephen F. Austin
DL - Joseph Wallace, Sr., Sam Houston
LB - Quentin Brown, Jr., Sam Houston
LB - Brevin Randle, So., Stephen F. Austin
LB - Trevor Williams, Jr., Sam Houston
LB - Ronnell Wilson, Sr., Tarleton
DB - Devin Hafford, Sr., Tarleton
DB - Zyon McCollum, Sr., Sam Houston
DB - Anthony Ruffin, Jr., Lamar
DB - Jaylen Thomas, Sr., Sam Houston

2021 Preseason All-WAC Special Teams

K - Seth Morgan, Fr., Sam Houston
P - Matt McRobert, Sr., Sam Houston
KR - Jequez Ezzard, Gr., Sam Houston