

# FALCON SPORTS

Col. Randall W. Spetman, '76, Athletic Director



## Falcon Football Finds Solace in Season's Highlights

By Dave Kellogg  
Sports Information Office

For the record, Air Force ended its football season with a 6-5 overall mark following a 33-28 loss to the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque before an announced crowd of 21,013 at University Stadium in late November.

The last time the Falcons ended the season at 6-5 was in 1996. It

### Former Football Coach Ben Martin Named AOG's 23rd Honorary Member

Ben Martin, former longtime Falcon football coach, was voted the AOG's 23rd Honorary Member at the AOG Board of Directors meeting in November. He was honored at a luncheon on Feb. 12, which coincided with the board's February meeting.



*Former longtime Falcon football coach Ben Martin, at left, accepts his Honorary AOG Membership plaque from Board Chair Lt. Gen. (Ret) Marcus A. Anderson, '61, at a luncheon in Martin's honor in February.*

Honorary Membership in the Association of Graduates is limited to 20 living members. There are currently 14 living members and nine former honorary members who are deceased.

The membership was bestowed on Martin in recognition of his long-standing, continuous and dedicated service to the Air Force and the Academy. According to the citation, "Coach Martin's superior leadership and coaching on the gridiron earned him national recognition.

"Ben came to the Academy in 1958 and in his first year as head coach led the Falcons to the only undefeated season in their history and a berth in the Cotton Bowl. This remarkable season put Air Force football on the national map and paved the way for future successes to include appearances in the 1963 Gator and 1970 Sugar Bowls.

"Coach Martin's success at the Academy earned him the respect of his peers and his selection as president of the American Football Coaches Association in 1977. For the past 13 years Ben has continued his association with Falcon football as a color commentator for the Falcon Football Network.

"Coach Martin's impact on the Academy extends far beyond the playing field and radio booth. His exceptional leadership and commitment to the ideals of the Academy have had a positive influence on thousands of young people over the years."

An Honorary AOG Membership is the highest honor the graduate community bestows upon supporters of our institution. Honorary Memberships are awarded only to those individuals who "... have rendered outstanding and conspicuous service to the Air Force and/or the Air Force Academy." Membership is highly selective. Each requires a nomination by a board member and a unanimous vote by the sitting board. Honorary Membership is awarded for life.

marked the sixth consecutive season the Falcons finished the year with a winning record.

Even so, it fell far short of the team's goals for 1999. In fact, the Falcons won only one of their pre-season goals – capturing their 13<sup>th</sup> Commander-in-Chief's Trophy. The other two – winning the Mountain West Conference title and going to a bowl game – were dashed by finishing with a 2-5 league record and losing their last two conference games.

The New Mexico game started with a bang and ended in a whimper. The Falcons scored on their first three possessions to take a 21-7 lead at halftime thanks to two touchdowns by quarterback Mike Thiessen on runs of one and 18 yards. He also connected on a 34-yard pass play to wide receiver Matt Farmer – his first touchdown reception of the season.

The tide turned in the third quarter. The Lobos scored 26 unanswered points to take a 33-21 lead. New Mexico racked up 190 total yards in the third quarter and ran 24 plays compared to Air Force's 24 total yards and just seven offensive plays. The home team ended up with 441 yards in total offense to the Falcons' 423. The Lobos also beat Air Force at their own game in possession time with 36 minutes.

But the season was filled with highlights. For the record:

- Air Force won its 13<sup>th</sup> Commander-in-Chief's Trophy this season overall and the 11<sup>th</sup> under Fisher DeBerry. The Falcons defeated Navy 19-14 in Washington and Army 28-0 in Falcon Stadium. The Falcons have dominated the series, winning 13 trophy titles compared to six for Army and five for Navy. Air Force has a 37-19-0 record since 1972, while Army is 23-31-1 and Navy is 22-32-1.

- The team's firstclassmen are the fourth winningest class in Falcon history. The firsties posted a 34-14 record during their careers. The 1985 class is the winningest in history with a 38-12 record.

- Air Force blocked eight kicks this season, including two punts against New Mexico. The Falcons blocked a kick in each of the first two games, then went without one until blocking two punts against Brigham Young University. This marks the 10<sup>th</sup> consecutive year the team has blocked at least three kicks in a season. Air Force added a blocked field goal and punt against Colorado State University. Corey Nelson made both blocks to give him a team-best 3.5 blocks this season. He is the active career leader with 4.5 blocks for his career. His 3.5 blocks this year are the third most in school history and the most since Tim Curry blocked four last season. Air Force has 59 blocks in the 1990s. The Falcons entered the season ranked second nationally to Virginia Tech, which had blocked 64.

- This season is Air Force's 44<sup>th</sup> season of varsity football. The Falcons have posted a winning record in 27 seasons. Overall the Falcons' record stands at 261-218-13.

- Kicker Jackson Whiting finished 1999 with a perfect season. Whiting hit all 12 field goal attempts and all 26 extra points to tie for the conference lead in both categories. Whiting is the career field goal per-

*(Continued on next page.)*

### 2000 Falcon Football Schedule

As of March 1, 2000

Sept. 2	Cal State-Northridge at USAFA & Parents Weekend AOG Tailgate
Sept. 9	BYU at USAFA
Sept. 23	USAFA at Utah
Sept. 30	USAFA at UNLV
Oct. 7	Navy at USAFA & Reunion AOG Tailgate
Oct. 14	USAFA at Wyoming
Oct. 21	New Mexico at USAFA & Homecoming AOG Tailgate
Oct. 28	USAFA at Notre Dame
Nov. 4	USAFA at Army
Nov. 11	CSU at USAFA
Nov. 18	SDSU at USAFA & Reunion AOG Tailgate