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Inside this edition

President's Column, Page 2
Nagurski Legend, Mike McCoy, Page 3

Coach of the Year Award move changes FWAA calendar slightly

With the FWAA/Eddie Robinson Coach of the Year announcement moved up a month to Dec. 6 at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York City, the FWAA Awards season will be a little more crowded as the 2010 regular season ends in early December.

On Nov. 21 FWAA members will be receiving ballots via e-mail with six to 10 finalists for the FWAA Coach of the Year Award. They will be asked to submit their final ballots for the Eddie Robinson Coach of the Year by the following Saturday in order the winner to be determined.

The FWAA Awards season is just around the corner as teams move into the final third of their regular season in November. The rest of the FWAA Awards Calendar should hold to the form of past years.

FWAA members will receive initial defensive ballots on Nov. 8 to pick their top 11 defensive players by position in college football. They must complete those ballots by Nov. 13-14 and send them to their representative. In addition, we will allow members to nominate a player for the Bronko Nagurski Trophy (given each year to the best defensive player in college football.)

The same process will be used the following week for the offensive side of the ball and special teams. A space on the offensive ballot will be left for members to vote for the Outland Trophy winner (Best Interior Lineman in college football on offense or defense).

The FWAA All-America Committee will meet twice by conference call to determine the 2010 team. The FWAA All-America Committee is listed online and can be reached by clicking on "Awards" at the top of the www.fwaa.com home page. Every conference in the Division I Bowl subdivision has a representative as do the major independents. Each person's ballot will be

sent to the member on the committee you choose in correspondence with the conference or school you cover.

The FWAA Awards Calendar is listed on this page. As has been the case for about two decades, the Outland Trophy winner will be announced on Dec. 9 during the Home Depot ESPNU College Football Awards Show from Orlando, Florida. The FWAA All-America Team is scheduled to be announced on Dec. 11 on ABC.

2010-11 FWAA AWARDS CALENDAR

- **Nov. 8:** All-America defense ballots sent to membership
- **Nov. 14:** All-America defense selection committee call
- **Nov. 15:** All-America offense/special teams ballots distributed to membership
- **Nov. 16:** Eddie Robinson Award finalists announced
- **Nov. 18:** Bronko Nagurski Trophy finalists (5) announced
- **Nov. 21:** All-America offense/special teams selection committee call
- **Nov. 21:** Eddie Robinson Coach of Year Ballots sent to membership
- **Nov. 22:** Outland Trophy finalists (3) announced
- **Dec. 6:** Bronko Nagurski Trophy announcement/ presentation (Charlotte, N.C.)
- **Dec. 6:** Eddie Robinson Coach of the Year Award announcement/ presentation (New York City)
- **Dec. 9:** Outland Trophy winner announcement (The Home Depot ESPNU College Football Awards Show)
- **Dec. 11:** FWAA All-America Team announced (ABC)
- **Jan. 3:** Orange Bowl Courage Award on-field presentation (Miami Gardens, Fla.)
- **Jan. 10:** Freshman All-America Team announced (Scottsdale, Ariz.)
- **Jan. 11:** Grantland Rice Trophy announcement/ presentation (Tentative, Scottsdale, Ariz.)
- **Jan. 13:** Outland Trophy banquet (Omaha, Neb.)

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President's column



TIM
GRIFFIN

A change in philosophy by the Marriott Company is ending the VIP program for FWAA members.

I figure that I've stayed in Marriott properties for a combined total of more than two years in my life. So, the Marriott VIP Card is something I have held close to my heart.

Almost every sportswriter who travels has a certain amount of brand affinity. Marriott was able to seize upon that fact to become a leader in the field. As such, some members considered acquiring a Marriott VIP Card as one of the most important perks of FWAA membership.

Immediate Past FWAA president George Schroeder has overseen the Marriott account for us for several years. Along with Joe Mitch, the United States Basketball Writers Association of America executive director, they have started negotiations for a new arrangement with Marriott that would be tailored to our two organizations. Several of the current cards expire in January, 2011, and some not until July, 2011.

The hotel business apparently is struggling, at least considering the correspondence that I repeatedly see from the various companies. So you would think Marriott officials would be seeking to fill their rooms, even with discounts.

But the rooms set aside for the special VIP rates are getting to be more difficult to find (particularly during peak periods in some premier destinations) because there are so many VIP card holders. The program was originally set up for sports executives and coaches. With the addition of writers groups, the competition for the rates has grown.

"Each hotel decides how they are going to parcel those rooms out," Schroeder said. "We thought we had a deal in good faith to continue the pro-

gram. Joe and I are very disappointed and the fact they didn't tell us until a couple of months after the fact."

The FWAA has been a good partner for Marriott over the years. All of the BCS bowls games now use Marriott properties for the media through our insistence. That deal has provided Marriott with an inventory of thousands of hotel nights during that period over the years.

Apparently, those figures don't resonate with the hotel's bean counters as much as we all would like.

Schroeder remains confident that some kind of program will be worked out with Marriott. He's also open to hooking up with another hotel chain regardless of what happens with Marriott.

The hotel discount is only a portion of an array of products that are provided with FWAA membership. The membership to Rivals.com is worth more than the cost of yearly membership. There are also deals in place for preseason year-books, computer security devices, rental cars and a clothing line among others.

- For the fifth straight year, the FWAA and the Discover Orange Bowl will announce a weekly nominee for the Discover Orange Bowl/FWAA Courage Award each Wednesday during the season for an athlete who overcomes adversity in his college football career. The yearly recipient of the Courage Award will be announced in December and presented with a trophy in conjunction with this year's Discover Orange Bowl. Any potential nominees should be sent to George Schroeder. You may contact him at gschroeder@aol.com.

- We're also looking for recommendations for the best and brightest among the sports information directors across the country. Let me or Steve Richardson know if you've been impressed with the work of an SID staff, or if you think one might be lacking.

We're interested to know what you think.

You may contact me at my new location back at my old newspaper, the *San Antonio Express-News*, which I rejoined in late September. My new e-mail is tgriffin@express-news.net

Nagurski Legend: Mike McCoy

Editor's Note: Mike McCoy, a defensive tackle on the FWAA's 1969 All-American Team, will receive the Bronko Nagurski Legends Award on Dec. 6.

By LOU SOMOGYI
Blue & Gold Illustrated

Mike McCoy can appreciate the statement that 1980s Chicago Bears defensive tackle and cultural icon William "The Refrigerator" Perry once made while describing himself:

"When I was little, I was big."

While going out to play with his friends even in his elementary school years, McCoy often would be lovingly reminded about the perils that can come from his size.

"Mom said, 'Don't sit on your friends' bicycles, because you'll break them,'" chuckled McCoy this summer.

Consequently, McCoy developed a bit of a complex about his supreme size. Because he feared hurting people, he didn't even begin to compete in football until his sophomore year at Erie (Pa.) Cathedral Prep under head coach Tony Zambrowski, who played for Notre Dame legend Frank Leahy from 1949-51.

"It took a little while to get aggressive, and Coach Zambrowski helped me with that, to take that on the field, to have that aggressiveness on the field," McCoy said. "It took me a while to understand it, until I started getting whacked a few times. I said, 'You know, these guys want to try to hurt me.' Then I started to get more aggressive."

Combining his new found aggression with taking up wrestling that same year -- "Wrestling really helped me with the balance and the strength and the endurance." -- McCoy became one of the premier football prospects in the Keystone State in 1965. Although he also took official visits to Penn State, Syracuse and Indiana, McCoy's Catholic faith and the presence of Zambrowski made Notre Dame a relatively easy decision.

When McCoy enrolled in 1966, the 6-5, 270-pound freshman already was an awe-inspiring sight in an era when anyone more than 250 pounds was deemed a behemoth. The largest starting offensive lineman on Notre Dame's 1966 national champs was 235-pound senior Paul Seiler, the 12th pick in the 1967 NFL Draft.

Freshmen were ineligible to play until 1972, but with All-Americans such as Kevin Hardy, Pete Duranko and Alan Page on that defensive line, McCoy would have had to bide his time anyway.

As a sophomore in 1967 McCoy began to work into the rotation at tackle with starters Hardy and Eric Norri, and by the end of his junior year he established himself as one of the nation's elite football stars.

It was in the 1968 finale at defending national cham-

pion USC that the Los Angeles media tagged McCoy as a "sure bet All-America for 1969." McCoy controlled the line of scrimmage against the vaunted Trojan front, limiting Heisman Trophy winner O.J. Simpson to 55 yards on 22 carries, the lowest total in his college career. The 21-21 verdict, in which USC scored only 14 points on offense, left the Irish ranked No. 5 in the nation.

At one point in the fourth quarter, Simpson looked up into the face of McCoy when both were on the ground and exclaimed, "Oh, no, not you again!"

While helping the Irish to their third consecutive No. 5 finish in 1969, McCoy indeed earned consensus first-team All-America notice and placed sixth in the Heisman Trophy balloting. Since 1950, the only Notre Dame defensive lineman to finish higher in the Heisman voting was Ross Browner (5th) in 1977.

Under the tutelage of defensive line coach Joe Yonto, Notre Dame was renowned as "Defensive Line U." from 1964-80. Eight different Irish defensive linemen were first-round picks from 1967-78, with McCoy tabbed as the No. 2 overall pick in 1970 by the Green Bay Packers.

In the last 16 years, only eight Notre Dame defensive linemen have been drafted, including Renaldo Wynn (1997) the only first-round selection.

However, McCoy noted that in his era defensive players had more advantages, whereas today's game and the rule changes tilt more to offenses.

"It's a different game in the [defensive] line, because they've allowed the offensive linemen to extend their arms," McCoy explained. "You couldn't do that before. You can't throw a club into their head or their chest anymore, so you have to have different techniques as a defensive lineman.

"And these [offensive linemen] are so big now, and they're benching so much weight, and they get that hand out there. If they get it inside the jersey, they're grabbing. So it's very difficult for a defensive lineman to break free from that ... It's just the way the game has evolved.

"From a defensive standpoint, at least they can't cut you now and clip you like they used to do, so guys are playing longer and not getting hurt as bad. It's kind of a trade-off."

Weight training is far different too, which is why as gargantuan as McCoy was in his playing days, he'd blend right in these days, or maybe even be undersized.

Nevertheless, McCoy believes his "conditioning work" during the summer at Notre Dame could match anything today's players do, and he wouldn't trade the value of actually being able to go home, take some time off from football and earn some money during the summer months. Today, football is a non-stop, year-round com-

(Continued on page 4)

Nagurski Legend (continued)

(Continued from page 3)

mitment, including summer school and summer strength and conditioning training on campus.

"I was out there shoveling asphalt," said McCoy of his summer job after completing the school year at Notre Dame. "It was 90 degrees in the streets of Erie, and that stuff is coming off the truck at 350 degrees. There's no way I could have worked that hard at Notre Dame.

"I did that for two or three summers, and I put some dollars in my pocket. My mom kept the account and sent me 10 bucks here or there when I needed it to go buy some Twinkies. ... That summer was a good time to relax and do some training -- and there's that anticipation of coming in there in August."

After receiving his economics degree from Notre Dame in 1970, McCoy embarked on a productive 11-year NFL career, leading Green Bay in quarterback sacks in 1973 and 1976, and even receiving the Dodge NFL Man of the Year award.

Yet during those playing days, he did not define his life by his football prowess. As comical as it may seem with today's exorbitant salaries, McCoy was sometimes even more active during the "off season." This included working in sales for Valley School Supplies in Appleton, Wis., insurance, banking, dabbling in some real estate, and even getting his pilot's license.

"One off season I made more than I did as a player," McCoy noted.

But he soon discovered that his greatest fulfillment came from working in Catholic ministries and with America's youth.

Following the end of his NFL career in 1980, McCoy was appointed by President Ronald Reagan to the Council on Sports for a Drug Free America and by former Pennsylvania governor Dick Thornburgh to the Pennsylvania Council for Physical Fitness. After participating in NFL chapel programs and speaking organizations, McCoy served as the chaplain of the Atlanta Braves (he now resides in the Peach State with wife his wife Kia, who skated with Ice Capades) and currently serves on several community outreach boards. This was inspired when his oldest daughter, Molly, one of his four children, came home from the seventh grade one day in the mid-1980s.

"She was telling me what's going on in the schools in our little town of Pennsylvania we lived in outside of Erie, and I was just shocked," McCoy said. "I knew our culture was changing. And then at that time, I had a chance to join an organization as a former NFL player and speak full-time in schools across the country."

McCoy engaged in that work for about six years and it evolved into joining Bill Glass Ministries in 1992. He has spoken anywhere from grade schools in Scotland to pris-

ons in South Africa, but the 61-year-old McCoy has now centralized his work more toward Catholic schools in America. Mike McCoy Ministries can be found under www.mccoy77.com, representing his jersey number at Notre Dame, not the 76, 79 or 63 he wore with four different NFL franchises.

"This past year, I'm just focusing in on the Catholic schools because of my background and being able to get in there as a former Notre Dame player and a former NFL player," McCoy said. "I speak on the message of hope and encouragement, and not have to worry about mentioning the word of God at the Catholic schools like we, unfortunately, have to worry about that in public schools.

"We've had students in Catholic schools across the country that are cutting themselves, that are feeling depressed, suicide notes, you just can't believe it. It's incredible what our culture is doing to our young people in America. And so in some way if I can help through that, do that early intervention ... I love what I do. I've got a passion for it. I'm already almost booked for the fall and several dates for spring [in 2011]."

McCoy is the father of four adult children: Molly (37), Maggie (35), Katie (31) and Caleb (29), and the grandfather of six. When McCoy was growing up, the main voice came from parents and teachers, with television (all of three stations back then) seen as maybe an outside voice of influence. Today, the outside voices have become far more dominant and prolific.

"I did a public school, my last one, last May," he said. "I was in a school in Toledo and I asked a lot of the administrators, 'What happened here?' And they said, 'We lost control about three years ago. The students do not respond to anything.' And that's the hip-hop generation, it's the gangster rap, it's all that garbage that's coming out of Hollywood and our movies, and it's taken an impact in our culture.

"I didn't approach it from a religious standpoint in the public schools. In the public schools, we were sponsored by local business people. Having a platform as a former Notre Dame football player and as a former NFL player, it changed the dynamics of the assembly. I can't tell you how many times we've had principals tell our organization that I was involved with before, 'You're the first guys who've come in here where they sit down and listen.' I think it's because of the size and what we've done in life, and 'You're the first guys who've come in here where they sit down and listen.' I think it's because of the size and what we've done in life, and they respect that."

Just like when he was little, Mike McCoy continues to loom big -- in more ways than one.