

## Awards, meeting on FWAA agenda

The FWAA has named winners of the Bronko Nagurski and Outland Trophies and members of its 63<sup>rd</sup> FWAA All-America team.

The awards season will continue through December into early January at the association's meeting Jan. 5-9 at the BCS 1-2 game in Glendale, Ariz.

The FWAA awards season kicked off on Dec. 4, when Ohio State's sophomore linebacker James Laurinaitis became the first Buckeye to win the Bronko Nagurski Trophy (Page 7), which the FWAA awards to the best defensive player in college football.

Next up was the presentation of the FWAA's Outland Trophy (Page 6) on the ESPN College Football Awards

Show on Dec. 7. Wisconsin offensive tackle Joe Thomas became the first Badger to win the award, which is given to the best interior lineman in college football on either side of the ball.

For the third straight season, the 25-man FWAA All-America Team (Pages 4-5) was announced on television. During a one-hour ABC special on the afternoon of Dec. 9, the association's 63<sup>rd</sup> team was presented on a show sponsored by Cingular from the Atlantic Dance Hall on Disney's Boardwalk in Lake Buena Vista,

Fla. Virginia's Jim Bakhitar, a member of the 1957 FWAA All-America team, won the FWAA Alumni team

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The FWAA held a book signing for its new book, *60 Years of the Outland Trophy*, in Dallas on Nov. 28 at Sullivan's Steakhouse. Pictured, facing camera, are author Gene Duffey and former Outland winners J.D. Roberts of Oklahoma, Russell Maryland of Miami, Chad Hennings of Air Force and Randy White of Maryland.

*Photo by Ken Stephens*

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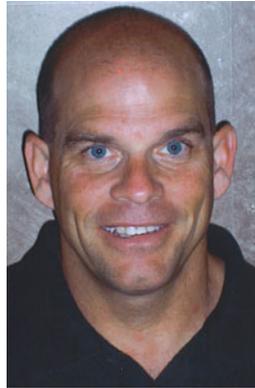
**Andrew Logue**  
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# President's column



**DENNIS  
DODD**

Anybody out there remember the old NCAA Football Forum?

For college football writers, it ranked right up there with Christmas, New Year's Eve and the day after signing day.

A few coaches would fly to Kansas City each February to discuss the game with a few writers.

The NCAA reserved a conference room in a downtown hotel. There was some loose subject matter, a rules update and a meal or two. There was actual interaction between the media and coaches. Camaraderie even.

Everyone benefited. Coaches told their stories. We wrote ours. The NCAA looked good. But the forum died an anonymous death a few years ago. Not by FWAA choice, mind you. It was our hot stove league.

Before my term runs out I'd like to get the forum up and running again. The National Football Foundation has expressed interest. The foundation is moving to Dallas, about as perfect a football town as there is.

No one is promising anything yet, but we're thinking a couple of days in the spring. Coaches (and maybe players) TBA. The point is to establish/enhance/cultivate our relationship with the coaches.

As you may or may not know, it has not been a good year in that regard. The two have been drifting apart for a while. There are a variety of reasons most of them revolving around money—which schools and coaches have, and we usually don't.

I'm not going to light my usual flame-thrower in terms of access. This is not the time or space. It is time for members

to take ownership of the situation. The FWAA can do only so much. When a situation develops, talk to your editor, your publisher, your paper's lawyer. In extreme cases a columnist needs to write about it.

But the FWAA is not here to be confrontational all the time. That's why it's also time to extend an invitation to the foundation, the American Football Coaches Association and FWAA members.

In the next few weeks, I intend to do my best to revive the old forum. It will have a new name, maybe even a sponsor. How does some time in May sound?

I'm looking for input from members. How many of you would be interested? Who would you like to see there? We're open to suggestions on participants and the format.

If you're in, you need to hit up your editors about coverage and colleagues about making this a big-time event. The foundation needs the attention. We need our sources.

Best case: There would be significant social, off-the-record time where coaches and writers could, well, gab. Heisman and All-American candidates could be previewed. Why not get a member of the rules committee to stop by? This instant replay thing seems to have killed a few trees the past couple of years.

The simple conversation between our diverse worlds has been lost in a lot of ways. This is a way to kick it around long before kicking it off for '07.

I'm open to any kind of format but I want to get this thing going again. It was invaluable during the cold and snow of Kansas City in February. Just think how much better it will be in the spring warmth of Dallas.

You can contact me at [ddodd@cbs.com](mailto:ddodd@cbs.com). Do not hesitate. I'm waiting to hear from you.

# Eddie Robinson award down to nine finalists

The FWAA has announced nine finalists for the Eddie Robinson Coach of the Year Award to be voted upon by the entire membership.

With the regular season heading into the final week, the FWAA, in conjunction with the Tostitos Fiesta Bowl, has tabbed the following finalists: Arkansas' Houston Nutt, Rutgers' Greg Schiano, Wake Forest's Jim Grobe, Houston's Art Briles, Hawaii's June Jones, Michigan's Lloyd Carr, BYU's Bronco Mendenhall, Boise State's Chris Petersen and Oklahoma's Bob Stoops.

The finalists will be placed on a ballot which will be sent out to the entire FWAA membership by e-mail. FWAA members will be asked to vote for their top three choices in the order they are deserving.

The FWAA Coaching Award is named after Robinson, a coaching legend at Grambling State University for 55 years. He has more Division I victories (408) than any other coach. The winner of the FWAA/Eddie Robinson Coach of the Year Award will be announced and honored at a reception on Jan. 5 in Glendale, Ariz., in conjunction with the BCS 1-2 game.

It is a particularly competitive year in the coaching profession. As a result, the FWAA All-America Committee, which selects the finalists, believed it was up to the membership to decide among an array of candidates.

Surprising years by Arkansas, Wake Forest, Michigan and Rutgers were reasons for the competitive balance.

Nutt's Razorbacks came out of nowhere after losing their opener badly to USC, won 10 straight games, and secured a place in the SEC title game opposite Florida. Wake Forest, under Grobe, likewise rather stunningly made the ACC title game.

Rutgers may be the Cinderella story with Schiano, after taking East Coast football by storm and contending for the Big East title. Michigan, after a sub-par 2005 season, stormed back to win its first 11 games before falling to top-ranked Ohio State.

Meanwhile, strong seasons by BYU, Houston and Hawaii all qualified those coaches as Eddie Robinson Coach of the Year candidates.

Boise State's Petersen has directed the Broncos to the only other unbeaten regular season in major-college football besides Ohio State and a spot in the Fiesta Bowl against Oklahoma. Stoops' Sooners won the Big 12 title game against Nebraska after losing their starting quarterback and top running back.



Houston  
Nutt  
*Arkansas*



Greg  
Schiano  
*Rutgers*



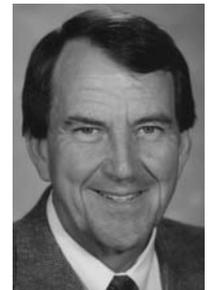
Jim Grobe  
*Wake  
Forest*



Art Briles  
*Houston*



June Jones  
*Hawaii*



Lloyd Carr  
*Michigan*



Bronco  
Mendenhall  
*BYU*



Chris  
Petersen  
*Boise State*



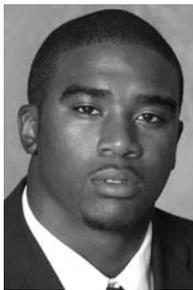
Bob Stoops  
*Oklahoma*

Of the nine candidates, only Stoops is a previous winner. He won the Eddie in 2000, the same season his Sooners won the FWAA's Grantland Rice Trophy, symbolic of the national championship.

# FWAA ALL-AMERICA OFFENSE



Pos.	Player, School	Ht., Wt.	Cl.
QB	Troy Smith, Ohio State	6-1, 215	Sr.
RB	Darren McFadden, Arkansas	6-2, 210	So.
RB	Steve Slaton, West Virginia	5-10, 190	So.
WR	Robert Meachem, Tennessee	6-3, 210	Jr.
WR	Jeff Samardzija, Notre Dame	6-5, 216	Sr.
WR	Calvin Johnson, Georgia Tech	6-4, 235	Jr.
OL	Justin Blalock, Texas	6-4, 329	Sr.
C	Dan Mozes, West Virginia	6-4, 290	Sr.
OL	Joe Thomas, Wisconsin	6-8, 306	Sr.
OL	Sam Baker, USC	6-5, 305	Jr.
OL	Jake Long, Michigan	6-7, 316	Jr.



Smith  
*Ohio State*



McFadden  
*Arkansas*



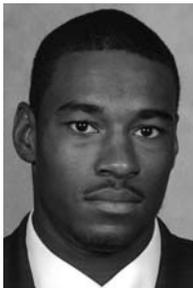
Slaton  
*W. Virginia*



Meachem  
*Tennessee*



Samardzija  
*Notre Dame*



Johnson  
*Georgia Tech*



Blalock  
*Texas*



Mozes  
*W. Virginia*



Thomas  
*Wisconsin*



Baker  
*USC*



Long  
*Michigan*

# ALL-AMERICA DEFENSE, SPECIALISTS

Pos.	Player, School	Ht., Wt.	Cl.
DL	Gaines Adams, Clemson	6-5, 265	Sr.
DL	Eric Foster, Rutgers	6-2, 260	Jr.
DL	Justin Hickman, UCLA	6-1, 261	Sr.
DL	LaMarr Woodley, Michigan	2-2, 268	Sr.
LB	James Laurinaitis, Ohio State	6-2, 231	So.
LB	Patrick Willis, Mississippi	6-2, 230	Sr.
LB	H.B. Blades, Pittsburgh	6-0, 240	Sr.
DB	Leon Hall, Michigan	5-11, 193	Sr.
DB	Aaron Ross, Texas	6-1, 192	Sr.
DB	Reggie Nelson, Florida	6-1, 198	Jr.
DB	Dwight Lowery, San Jose State	6-1, 185	Jr.
P	Daniel Sepulveda, Baylor	6-3, 227	Sr.
K	Justin Medlock, UCLA	6-0, 186	Sr.
KR	DeSean Jackson, California	6-0, 160	So.



Adams  
Clemson



Foster  
Rutgers



Hickman  
UCLA



Woodley  
Michigan



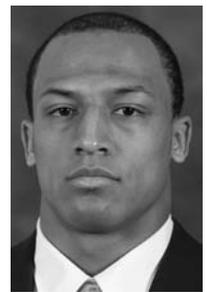
Laurinaitis  
Ohio St.



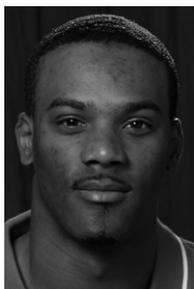
Willis  
Mississippi



Blades  
Pittsburgh



Hall  
Michigan



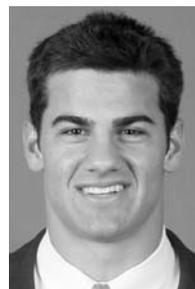
Ross  
Texas



Nelson  
Florida



Lowery  
San Jose St.



Sepulveda  
Baylor



Medlock  
UCLA



Jackson  
California

# Outland goes to Badgers' Thomas

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — Wisconsin offensive tackle Joe Thomas became the first Badger to win the Outland Trophy on Dec. 7 during the ESPN College Football Awards show from the Atlantic Dance Hall on Disney's Boardwalk.

By winning the 61st Outland Trophy, he received a nice present three days after he turned 22 on Monday. Two days later, on Wednesday night, he was engaged to Annie Nelson, a former Wisconsin basketball player.

"I was very excited (to win)," Thomas said. "A lot of emotion goes through your mind. It kind of hits you all at once. You kind of forget things for a couple of minutes. You're walking on Cloud 9. All three of us (finalists) had a great shot of winning. All three of us were very deserving."

Thomas, a 6-8, 306-pound senior from Brookfield, Wis., became the third Big Ten Conference player in four years to win Outland Trophy, which goes to the top interior lineman in college football. Iowa offensive tackle Robert Gallery won the Outland in 2003, and Minnesota center Greg Eslinger captured it in 2005. In all, 13 players from current Big Ten schools have won the award.

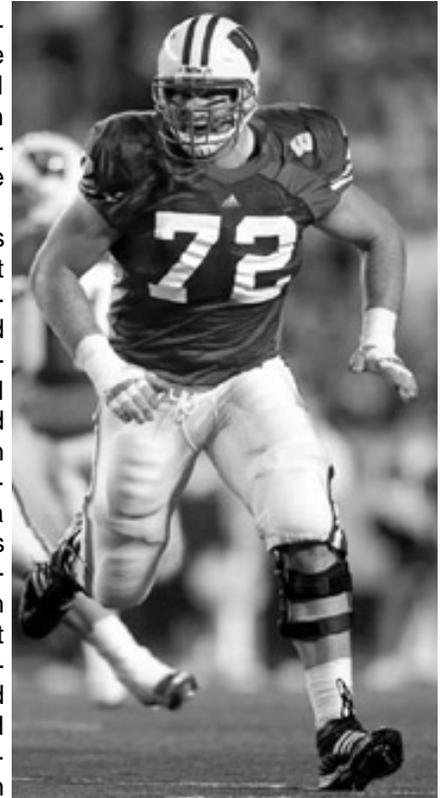
Thomas, projected as one of the top picks in the 2007 NFL Draft, was the mainstay of a Badger offensive line, which paved the way for freshman running back P.J. Hill. The Badgers' offense was 21st in the country, scoring 30.3 points per game.

Thomas was a team captain and starter for 12 games after overcoming ACL surgery last January. He suffered the injury while filling in on a depleted defensive line in the Badgers' bowl game against Auburn. A former track and field athlete in the shot put, he also plans to someday also pursue a career in real estate. This season, he was also a finalist for the Draddy Trophy, the National Football Foundation's academic award.

Wisconsin (11-1) lost only to Michigan this season

and will play Arkansas (10-3) in the Capital One Bowl on Jan. 1, when Thomas will conclude his collegiate career.

The Outland is the third oldest award in major college football behind the Heisman Trophy and Maxwell Award. It is named after the late John Outland, who created the award a year before his death. An All-American lineman at Pennsylvania at the turn of the century, Dr. Outland created the award because he believed linemen needed more recognition. The first



Wisconsin's Joe Thomas

Outland Award was presented to the late George Connor of Notre Dame in 1946.

Thomas will be honored at the annual presentation banquet, which is sponsored by the Greater Omaha Sports Committee, on Jan. 11 in Omaha, Neb. Notre Dame's Bill Fischer, the 1948 winner, will also receive his Outland Trophy. Until the late 1980s, the FWAA awarded only a plaque to the winner.

## PAST OUTLAND WINNERS

1946 George Connor, Notre Dame	1961 Merlin Olsen, Utah State	1976 Ross Browner, Notre Dame	1991 Steve Emtman, Washington
1947 Joe Steffy, Army	1962 Bobby Bell, Minnesota	1977 Brad Shearer, Texas	1992 Will Shields, Nebraska
1948 Bill Fischer, Notre Dame	1963 Scott Appleton, Texas	1978 Greg Roberts, Oklahoma	1993 Rob Waldrop, Arizona
1949 Ed Bagdon, Michigan State	1964 Steve Delong, Tennessee	1979 Jim Ritcher, N.C. State	1994 Zach Wiegert, Nebraska
1950 Bob Gain, Kentucky	1965 Tommy Nobis, Texas	1980 Mark May, Pittsburgh	1995 Jonathan Ogden, UCLA
1951 Jim Weatherall, Oklahoma	1966 Loyd Phillips, Arkansas	1981 Dave Rimington, Nebraska	1996 Orlando Pace, Ohio State
1952 Dick Modzelewski, Maryland	1967 Ron Yary, USC	1982 Dave Rimington, Nebraska	1997 Aaron Taylor, Nebraska
1953 J.D. Roberts, Oklahoma	1968 Bill Stanfill, Georgia	1983 Dean Steinkuhler, Nebraska	1998 Kris Farris, UCLA
1954 Bill Brooks, Arkansas	1969 Mike Reid, Penn State	1984 Bruce Smith, Virginia Tech	1999 Chris Samuels, Alabama
1955 Calvin Jones, Iowa	1970 Jim Stillwagon, Ohio State	1985 Mike Ruth, Boston College	2000 John Henderson, Tennessee
1956 Jim Parker, Ohio State	1971 Larry Jacobson, Nebraska	1986 Jason Buck, BYU	2001 Bryant McKinnie, Miami
1957 Alex Karras, Iowa	1972 Rich Glover, Nebraska	1987 Chad Hennings, Air Force	2002 Rien Long, Washington State
1958 Zeke Smith, Auburn	1973 John Hicks, Ohio State	1988 Tracy Rucker, Auburn	2003 Robert Gallery, Iowa
1959 Mike McGee, Duke	1974 Randy White, Maryland	1989 Mohammed Elewonibi, BYU	2004 Jammal Brown, Oklahoma
1960 Tom Brown, Minnesota	1975 Lee Roy Selmon, Oklahoma	1990 Russell Maryland, Miami (Fla.)	2005 Greg Eslinger, Minnesota

# Laurinaitis wins Nagurski Trophy

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Ohio State linebacker James Laurinaitis won the 2006 Bronko Nagurski Trophy, which annually is awarded to the best defensive player in college football.

Laurinaitis, nicknamed "Little Animal" in reference to his professional wrestling father, "The Animal," is the first sophomore to win the award, which is voted upon by the Football Writers Association of America and sponsored by the Charlotte Touchdown Club.

"It was an honor to be here," Laurinaitis said. "To be with this level of players, it's kind of surreal, me being the young guy. I was in high school when these guys were (already) in college; I definitely could not have done it without the entire defensive line and the whole defense."

The announcement was made Monday night

at the annual awards banquet attended by more than 900 people at the Westin Hotel, where Northwestern coach Pat Fitzgerald, the only two-time Bronko Award winner in 1995 and 1996, gave the main address.

Laurinaitis was the star defensive player on an Ohio State defense that ranked second in the country in allowing just 10.4 points a game. He led the top-ranked and unbeaten Buckeyes (12-0) in total tackles (100).

"What I like about him is he is instinctive," said Fitzgerald, whose Wildcats played against the Buckeyes this season. "He has those things you like to see in a linebacker. He can run. He is very physical against blockers and at the point of attack. And he catches it extremely well. He had five interceptions. Those are the things which stand out to me."

Over the course of the season, Laurinaitis posted 8.5 tackles for 44 yards in losses, including four sacks for minus-40 yards. Playing more like a defensive back, he

intercepted five passes and had 56 yards in returns. He broke up a pass and forced three fumbles.

Ohio State's defense didn't surprise, Laurinaitis.

"We knew more focus would be on our offense," he said. "Anybody who knew how many people we had lost on defense would be crazy not to think that. But within the organization, we thought we had the tools to replace those guys."

In Ohio State's early season showdown with defending national champion

Texas in Austin, Laurinaitis was named the Bronko Nagurski Defensive Player of the Week when he made 13 tackles, forced two fumbles and made an interception in the Buckeyes' victory.

Early in a scoreless game, Texas drove to the Ohio State 7 where Laurinaitis forced a fumble, which



Ohio State's James Laurinaitis was picked up by an Ohio State teammate and returned to mid-field. The Buckeyes scored five plays later to take a 7-0 lead. He also intercepted a pass early in the third quarter, which set up another Ohio State score.

"After the game, I didn't think about the individual stuff," Laurinaitis said. "I was more thrilled we had gone into a hostile environment and won a 1-2 matchup; I had a lucky interception. They threw it right to me. The defensive line had a great rush. And the ball just pops up (on the forced fumble)."

The award is given in memory of the legendary Nagurski, a former All-American lineman at Minnesota (1927-29) and star for professional football's Chicago Bears in the 1930s.

Other 2006 Bronko finalists were Mississippi linebacker Patrick Willis, Florida defensive back Reggie Nelson, Michigan defensive back Leon Hall and Clemson end Gaines Adams.

## PAST NAGURSKI WINNERS

Year	Player	School
1993	Rob Waldrop	Arizona
1994	Warren Sapp	Miami (Fla.)
1995	Pat Fitzgerald	Northwestern
1996	Pat Fitzgerald	Northwestern
1997	Charles Woodson	Michigan
1998	Champ Bailey	Georgia
1999	Corey Moore	Virginia Tech
2000	Dan Morgan	Miami
2001	Roy Williams	Oklahoma
2002	Terrell Suggs	Arizona State
2003	Derrick Strait	Oklahoma
2004	Derrick Johnson	Texas
2005	Elvis Dumervil	Louisville

# Awards roundup (continued)

*(Continued from page 1)*

award.

On Jan. 2, the 2006 FedEx Orange Bowl/FWAA Courage Award winner, Clemson's Ray Ray McElrathbey will receive his trophy during the Orange Bowl game between Wake Forest and Louisville.

Nine finalists for the FWAA/Eddie Robinson Coach of the Year Award were announced in late November (Page 3). On-line voting by the entire FWAA membership concluded on Dec. 6. And the announcement of the winner will be on the evening of Jan. 5.

The FWAA's annual meeting will be Jan. 5-9 in Glendale, Ariz., in conjunction with the Bowl Championship Series 1-2 game.

The FWAA Board meeting will be the afternoon of Jan. 6. And the awards breakfast and meeting will be on

Jan. 8, the day of the 1-2 game. SEC commissioner Mike Slive will be present at the breakfast for a discussion of the BCS.

The FWAA Freshman All-America team and the winner of the 2007 Bert McGrane Award also will be announced at the breakfast. The FWAA will also recognize winners of the Best Writing Contest and name the Volney Meece Scholarship winner.

The presentation of the Grantland Rice Super 16 Trophy is tentatively scheduled for the morning of Jan. 9 at the media hotel. The winner will be the FWAA's national champion as selected by 16 FWAA members who vote in the weekly poll.

On Jan. 11 in Omaha, the annual Outland Trophy presentation banquet will be held at the Doubletree Hotel. Wisconsin's Thomas will receive his trophy at the banquet sponsored by the Omaha Sports Committee.



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