

FWAA's All-America team presented for 65th time

For the second straight season, the two best conferences in college football dominated the FWAA's 25-man All-America team. The association's 65th edition was led by seven players from the offensive-laden Big 12 and six from the more defensive-oriented Southeastern Conference.

The FWAA All-America team, the second longest continuously published team in major college football, was announced Dec. 13 on ABC Television for the fifth straight season during a one-hour show that was sponsored by AT&T. The FWAA has named an All-America team in some form since 1944.

Highlighting the offensive side of the ball were six players from the Big 12 Conference, which produced five of college football's most productive offensives in 2008 at Oklahoma, Texas, Texas Tech, Oklahoma State and Missouri. Texas' Colt McCoy was the quarterback of the team, and his teammate and end Brian Orakpo was the Big 12's only representative on the defensive side of the ball.

Meanwhile, Alabama tackle Andre Smith, the 2008 Outland Trophy winner, was one of two SEC players on the offensive side of the ball along with Ole Miss tackle Michael Oher. The SEC landed three players on the defensive side of the ball, along with one on special teams.

Five schools among the nation's

Top 10 — Alabama, Texas, Penn State, USC and Florida — each had two players on the team. There are two repeaters on the FWAA team from last season, Texas Tech wide receiver Michael Crabtree and Utah kicker Louie Sakoda. The multi-faceted Sakoda, however, made the 2007 team as a punter this season. And for the second straight season, Missouri has a tight end on the team. This season Chase Coffman succeeded Martin Rucker at that spot.

After the Big 12 and SEC, the Big Ten was next with four selections and the Big East, Pac-10 and Mountain West had two each. The Atlantic Coast and Conference USA each had one player on the team. Orakpo, one of two ends from the state of Texas on the team, claimed the FWAA's Bronko Nagurski Trophy as the nation's top defender.

Reversing a trend from a year ago when youth prevailed, there were no freshmen on the team and only three sophomores. Twenty-two of the 25 players on the team were either juniors or seniors.

The 25-man FWAA All-American Team, the second longest continuously published team in college football, has been a staple of the college football scene since 1944.

First selected three years after the

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President's column



RON HIGGINS

Football coaches like to say the season is a marathon, not a sprint. But when you're the president of the FWAA and serving a one-year term, the year is a sprint and not a marathon.

I had 365 days to pound home the message about reduced access, about how we can take steps to fix something that is rapidly rolling downhill and headed off the cliff.

So I spoke to anyone who cared to listen. The Big Ten SIDs, Southeastern Conference football coaches, the Alabama Sportswriters Convention, CoSIDA, a conference call with outgoing Big East commissioner Mike Tranghese.

Did it work?

There *has* been progress. Baby steps, maybe, but progress.

For instance, the SEC opened its locker rooms for the first time at the championship game. Alabama writers who hadn't had access to true freshmen all year (a Nick Saban rule) were able to interview ALL players at their lockers. It was like the Berlin Wall being torn down.

Also, thanks to Charles Bloom of the SEC, there's now a media committee in the league comprised of writers, SIDs, assistant athletic directors and Bloom. It's a sounding board on hearing some of our complaints (such as getting players to interview rooms slowly on night deadlines).

The National Football Foundation executive director Steve Hatchell put together a forum last spring in Dallas, with coaches, athletic directors, a president and a conference commissioner. When it came to discussing the media's relationship with coaches, there was

good, honest exchange.

This thing is going to be an annual event. It's worth attending.

My goal as president this year was simple. I wanted the voice of the FWAA heard loud, long and unapologetic. We have been backing up too long, with access continually shrinking, and we had to draw a line in the sand.

The line is still there. Although I'm leaving office, my next job with the FWAA will continue to keep that line drawn.

We have to keep pressing the issue. We must keep talking with athletic directors and coaches and most of all conference offices.

Every conference needs to follow the SEC, be proactive and realize there are access issues and other problems. The SEC has a commissioner in Mike Slive who realizes the value of the league having a professional working relationship with the media.

This year, we did have members speak up when there were access issues, and as an organization we addressed them. Some schools and one conference in particular didn't like being publicly called out, but that would have never happened had they not treated the media unfairly.

Along the way in my one term, I discovered a lot of people deeply care about college football, guys like Bob Mancuso, who runs the Outland Trophy banquet in Omaha, and John Rocco, who does the same for the Bronko Nagurski Award in Charlotte. They put an extraordinary amount of blood, sweat and tears into those awards that the FWAA sponsors, and we like being associated with Bob and John.

Also, I want to make sure there is a clear understanding that most of the sports information directors are not our enemy. They are caught in the middle between us in the media and in many cases uncooperative paranoid coaches

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Nine coaches named finalists for Eddie Robinson Award

The Football Writers Association of America has announced nine finalists for the 2008 Eddie Robinson Coach of the Year Award to be voted upon by the entire membership.

With the 2008 regular season completed, the FWA, in conjunction with the Tostitos Fiesta Bowl, has tabbed the following finalists: Texas' Mack Brown, USC's Pete Carroll, Texas Tech's Mike Leach, Florida's Urban Meyer, Penn State's Joe Paterno, Boise State's Chris Petersen, Alabama's Nick Saban, Oklahoma's Bob Stoops and Utah's Kyle Whittingham.

The finalists will be placed on a ballot that will be sent to the entire FWA membership.

Two of the finalists, Boise State's Petersen and Utah's Whittingham, have directed their teams to unbeaten regular seasons, while seven of the nine coaches have led their teams to Bowl Championship Series games.

Of the nine finalists, four have previously been named the FWA's National Coach of the Year, led by Penn State's Joe Paterno, who has been honored by the FWA three times (1978, '82 and '86). Paterno has been a finalist on two other occasions

(1997 and 2005). Florida's Urban Meyer (2004), Alabama's Nick Saban (2003) and Oklahoma's Bob Stoops (2000) are the other previous winners. Saban is trying to become the second coach to win the honor at two different schools after earning the award at LSU five seasons ago.

While USC's Pete Carroll has never won the award, he has been a finalist three times in three consecutive years (2003-05). This also is the third time Texas' Mack Brown has been named a finalist, the second time at Texas (2005). In 1997, he was a finalist for the award at North Carolina. Boise State's Petersen is a finalist for the second time in three years, while Texas Tech's Leach and Utah's Whittingham are the only two first-time finalists. The FWA began naming its coaching award in honor of the late Robinson, the legendary Grambling State University coach, in 1997.

The winner of the FWA/Eddie Robinson Coach of the Year Award will be announced

and honored at a reception on Jan. 6 in Miami sponsored by the Tostitos Fiesta Bowl and presented in conjunction with the FedEx BCS Championship Game.



President's column (continued)

(Continued from page 2)

who view talking to us like getting teeth yanked at the dentist.

I want to urge all of our members to push the access issue, but do it in a professional manner with constant communication with your conference and your SID. Let's be responsible in our reporting so we don't give coaches any bullets to fire at us when we press for more access.

As we head to South Florida for the BCS national

championship game and I turn my office over to George Schroeder of the *Eugene Register-Guard*, I want to thank my wife Paige for her support in me flying all over the country this past year to spread the FWA gospel.

So as your president, this is a goodbye. But as the FWA watchdog (and George Schroeder's personal bodyguard), I'm just getting started.

FWAA ALL-AMERICA OFFENSE



Pos.	Player, School	Ht., Wt.	Cl.
QB	Colt McCoy, Texas	6-3, 210	Jr.
RB	Shonn Greene, Iowa	5-11, 235	Jr.
RB	Kendall Hunter, Oklahoma St.	5-8, 180	So.
WR	Michael Crabtree, Texas Tech	6-3, 222	So.
WR	Jarrett Dillard, Rice	5-11, 185	Sr.
TE	Chase Coffman, Missouri	6-6, 245	Sr.
C	A.Q. Shipley, Penn State	6-1, 297	Sr.
OL	Michael Oher, Mississippi	6-5, 318	Sr.
OL	Duke Robinson, Oklahoma	6-5, 335	Sr.
OL	Jason Smith, Baylor	6-5, 305	Sr.
OL	Andre Smith, Alabama	6-4, 330	Jr.



McCoy
Texas



Greene
Iowa



Hunter
Oklahoma St.



Crabtree
Texas Tech



Dillard
Rice



Coffman
Missouri



Shipley
Penn St.



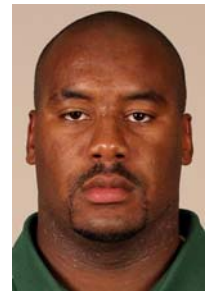
Smith
Alabama



Oher
Mississippi



Robinson
Oklahoma



Smith
Baylor

ALL-AMERICA DEFENSE, SPECIALISTS

Pos.	Player, School	Ht., Wt.	Cl.
DL	Jerry Hughes, TCU	6-2, 248	Jr.
DL	Terrence Cody, Alabama	6-5, 365	Jr.
DL	Brian Orakpo, Texas	6-4, 260	Sr.
DL	Aaron Maybin, Penn State	6-4, 236	Jr.
LB	Scot McKillop, Pittsburgh	6-4, 240	Sr.
LB	Rey Mauluga, Southern California	6-2, 260	Sr.
LB	Brandon Spikes, Florida	6-3, 245	Jr.
DB	Eric Berry, Tennessee	5-11, 195	So.
DB	Malcolm Jenkins, Ohio State	6-1, 201	Sr.
DB	Taylor Mays, Southern California	6-3, 230	Jr.
DB	Alphonso Smith, Wake Forest	5-9, 190	Sr.
K	Louie Sakoda, Utah	5-10, 178	Sr.
P	Kevin Huber, Cincinnati	6-1, 220	Sr.
KR	Brandon James, Florida	5-7, 186	Jr.



Hughes
TCU



Cody
Alabama



Orakpo
Texas



Maybin
Penn St.



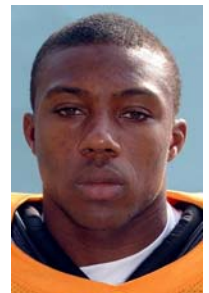
McKillop
Pittsburgh



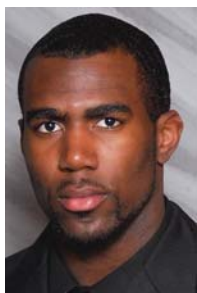
Mauluga
USC



Spikes
Florida



Berry
Tennessee



Jenkins
Ohio St.



Mays
USC



Smith
Wake Forest



Sakoda
Utah



Huber
Cincinnati



James
Florida

Alabama's Smith wins Outland Trophy

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — Alabama offensive tackle Andre Smith was named the winner of the 63rd Outland Trophy on Dec. 11.

The winner of the Outland Trophy, which goes to the best interior linemen on offense or defense in college football, was announced during The Home Depot ESPNU College Football Awards Show from The Walt Disney World Resort.

Smith became the second Alabama player to win the Outland Trophy after the Crimson Tide's Chris Samuels in 1999. LSU's Glenn Dorsey claimed the award a year ago.

The Football Writers Association of America selects the Outland winner from its 25-man All-America team, which will be announced on Saturday afternoon on ABC television. Smith won the Outland over Mississippi offensive tackle Michael Oher and Oklahoma offensive guard Duke Robinson, the other two Outland Trophy finalists.

"I was surprised to hear my name called because either one of those other two guys could have won the award," Smith said. "I think it helped to play on a dominating offensive line like we had, that opened up holes for our running game. I am proud to win this award, though I'd still like to be playing for a national championship."

Smith, a 6-5, 330-pound junior from Birmingham, Ala., has started 13 games at left tackle and has surrendered just one sack. He has helped Alabama (12-1) rank among the Top 25 rushing teams in college football. He was the SEC Offensive Lineman of the Week when Alabama rushed for 328 yards against Arkansas.

"There are a lot more guys who get the reputation than actually live up to the billing," said Alabama coach Nick Saban. "He started as a freshman and has improved every year. I don't see them all, and I'm not saying he is better than anybody else, but it's hard for me to think there is any other offensive lineman who has



Offensive tackle Andre Smith

played any better than him this season."

The Outland Trophy, which has been awarded annually by the FWAA since 1946, is named after the late John Outland, a lineman at Pennsylvania at the turn of the century.

The official award presentation to Smith will be Jan. 15, 2009, in Omaha, Neb., at a banquet sponsored by the Greater Omaha Sports Committee. Oklahoma's J.D. Roberts, the 1953 Outland Trophy winner, will also receive his trophy there.

PAST OUTLAND WINNERS

1946 George Connor, Notre Dame
1947 Joe Steffy, Army
1948 Bill Fischer, Notre Dame
1949 Ed Bagdon, Michigan State
1950 Bob Gain, Kentucky
1951 Jim Weatherall, Oklahoma
1952 Dick Modzelewski, Maryland
1953 J.D. Roberts, Oklahoma
1954 Bill Brooks, Arkansas
1955 Calvin Jones, Iowa
1956 Jim Parker, Ohio State
1957 Alex Karras, Iowa
1958 Zeke Smith, Auburn
1959 Mike McGee, Duke
1960 Tom Brown, Minnesota
1961 Merlin Olsen, Utah State

1962 Bobby Bell, Minnesota
1963 Scott Appleton, Texas
1964 Steve Delong, Tennessee
1965 Tommy Nobis, Texas
1966 Loyd Phillips, Arkansas
1967 Ron Yary, USC
1968 Bill Stanfill, Georgia
1969 Mike Reid, Penn State
1970 Jim Stillwagon, Ohio State
1971 Larry Jacobson, Nebraska
1972 Rich Glover, Nebraska
1973 John Hicks, Ohio State
1974 Randy White, Maryland
1975 Lee Roy Selmon, Oklahoma
1976 Ross Browner, Notre Dame
1977 Brad Shearer, Texas

1978 Greg Roberts, Oklahoma
1979 Jim Ritcher, N.C. State
1980 Mark May, Pittsburgh
1981 Dave Rimington, Nebraska
1982 Dave Rimington, Nebraska
1983 Dean Steinkuhler, Nebraska
1984 Bruce Smith, Virginia Tech
1985 Mike Ruth, Boston College
1986 Jason Buck, BYU
1987 Chad Hennings, Air Force
1988 Tracy Rocker, Auburn
1989 Mohammed Elewonibi, BYU
1990 Russell Maryland, Miami (Fla.)
1991 Steve Emtman, Washington
1992 Will Shields, Nebraska
1993 Rob Waldrop, Arizona

1994 Zach Wiegert, Nebraska
1995 Jonathan Ogden, UCLA
1996 Orlando Pace, Ohio State
1997 Aaron Taylor, Nebraska
1998 Kris Farris, UCLA
1999 Chris Samuels, Alabama
2000 John Henderson, Tennessee
2001 Bryant McKinnie, Miami
2002 Rien Long, Washington State
2003 Robert Gallery, Iowa
2004 Jammal Brown, Oklahoma
2005 Greg Eslinger, Minnesota
2006 Joe Williams, Wisconsin
2007 Glenn Dorsey, LSU

Nagurski Trophy goes to UT's Orakpo

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Texas defensive end Brian Orakpo on Dec. 7 claimed the 2008 Bronko Nagurski Trophy, which annually is awarded to the best defensive player in college football.

"When you look at all the key plays made by all the other finalists for this award, it's a great honor to win this award," Orakpo said.

"This has been a huge weekend for me. Yesterday, I graduated from Texas, and tonight, I won the Bronko Nagurski Trophy. I'd like to thank the FWAA and the Charlotte Touchdown Club. I've had to fight through a lot of injuries, so receiving this award is even more special."

Orakpo became the 16th winner of the award as voted upon by the Football Writers Association of America (FWAA) and sponsored by the Charlotte Touchdown Club. He is the second Texas player to win the award following linebacker Derrick Johnson in 2004.

Orakpo, a 6-4, 260-pound senior from Houston, is considered a top NFL prospect and has graduated with a degree in Sports Management. He was a prep basketball star who didn't focus on football until his senior year at Lamar High School.

But he has developed into one of college football's strongest and best players while at Texas.

He entered Texas weighing 210 pounds, but 50 pounds later, he has only eight percent body fat. He squats 600 pounds, benches presses 515 pounds and power cleans 380. Orakpo has run a 4.6 40-yard dash and has registered a 42-inch vertical leap.

"He has such an unbelievable combination of strength and speed that he's really unblockable," Texas coach Mack Brown said. "As an offense, you have to

account for him on every play or he'll just take over the game. Even when teams have tried to double team him or get him out of his game, he's such a smart, determined and gifted player that he's found a way to still have a big impact."



Brian Orakpo of Texas
(Photo by Ron J. Deshaies)

During Texas' four-game, mid-season stretch against ranked Big 12 teams — Oklahoma, Missouri, Oklahoma State and Texas Tech — Orakpo had 16 tackles, three sacks, seven tackles for losses, nine pressures, a forced fumble and helped force an interception.

Texas defeated OU, Missouri and OSU, but Orakpo missed most of the second half of the Texas Tech loss with a knee injury.

"It really hurt us when he went down for the second half of the game against Texas Tech," Brown said. "I have

never been around a player who works any harder than 'Rak.' He never takes a play off in a practice or a game, is always in the weight room working to get bigger, stronger and faster, studies his film and prepares as well as anyone."

The Bronko Nagurski Trophy 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.

The four other 2008 Nagurski finalists were Jerry Hughes of TCU, Rey Mauluga of USC, Alphonso Smith of Wake Forest and Brandon Spikes of Florida.

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
2006	James Laurinaitis	Ohio State
2007	Glenn Dorsey	LSU

All-America team (continued)

(Continued from page 1)

organization was formed, the FWAA's inaugural team included Army's Heisman Trophy tandem of Doc Blanchard and Glenn Davis and Georgia Tech's Frank Broyles, who later became Arkansas' head football coach and athletic director.

Over the years, the FWAA Team has highlighted all the game's great players in several media forums.

From 1946-1970, LOOK Magazine published the FWAA team and brought players and selected writers to New York City for a celebration. During that 25-year period, the FWAA team was introduced on national television shows by Bob Hope, Steve Allen, Perry Como and others.

After LOOK folded, the FWAA started a long association with NCAA Films (later known as NCAA Productions), which produced a 30-minute television show and sold it to sponsors. The team was part of ABC Television's 1981 College Football Series.

From 1983-90, the team was either on ABC or ESPN, and now has returned to the national spotlight on ABC.

The FWAA team has included most of the Heisman Trophy and Maxwell Award winners over the years and nearly all the Outland Trophy winners. Those are the three oldest awards in major-college football.

For more than six decades the FWAA has selected an All-America team with the help of its members and an All-America Committee that represents all the regions in the country. From that All-America team, the FWAA also selects the Outland Trophy winner (best interior lineman) and also the Bronko Nagurski Trophy winner (best defensive player).

Some of the true greats of the writing profession have helped to select this team over the years...Grantland Rice, Bert McGrane, Blackie Sherrod, Furman Bisher, Pat Harmon, Fred Russell, Edwin Pope, Murray Olderman, Paul Zimmerman and the list goes on and on. It is a team steeped in tradition and history and selected by a writers' group with the same attributes.



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