

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Mississippi's Werner Nominated for Discover Orange Bowl-FWAA Courage Award

DALLAS (FWAA) – Mississippi's Dan Werner is the weekly nominee for the 2012 Discover Orange Bowl-FWAA Courage Award, to be announced at the end of the season. Werner, the Rebels' co-offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach, has returned to college coaching – while remaining focused on his primary duties as a fulltime single father – after the death of his wife in 2009.

Werner, a longtime college assistant coach – he was a part of three national championships at Miami – had just taken a job as offensive coordinator of Northwestern (La.) State when his wife, Kim, died unexpectedly of heart-related issues in February 2009. The family hadn't moved from their home in Oxford, Miss., and Werner decided not to leave. With two young children to care for – Maya, then 10, and Ian, then 5, who had been diagnosed as autistic – he took a job at North Delta, a private high school in nearby Batesville, Miss. At 50, his priorities changed.

"At one point in my life," he told the headmaster, according to Yahoo! Sports, "I wanted to be the top coach in America. Now I just want to be a great dad."

Werner spent the next three years there. North Delta went 27-7 and won two district championships. Werner turned away interest from college coaches who needed assistants, telling them he couldn't afford to spend the time required on the road recruiting and in the office – away from his children. Instead, he settled into life as a single father and high school coach.

"I became a much better parent," he told Yahoo!, "(by) finding out what real families are supposed to be like."

Then Hugh Freeze was hired by Ole Miss, a few miles up the road. Werner had been an assistant along with Freeze under Ed Orgeron. Freeze offered Werner the co-offensive coordinator's position with a modified job description: Reduced travel, less time in the office, kids allowed at all times. Werner consulted with Maya, 13, and Ian, 7, and then accepted the job with family restrictions.

"It's a great testimony to what kind of man he is," Ole Miss receivers coach Grant Heard said. "He knows what he has to get done at work, and he knows he has to get home to love his kids."

For the seventh straight year, the Football Writers Association of America and the Discover Orange Bowl will announce a weekly nominee each Wednesday during the season. A blue-ribbon panel will determine the winner from all of the nominees. The winner of the Discover Orange Bowl-FWAA Courage Award will be announced in December and be presented with the trophy during the week of the 2013 Discover BCS National Championship Game.

The Courage Award was created by ESPN The Magazine's senior writer Gene Wojciechowski, also an FWAA member. A select group of writers from the FWAA vote on the winner each year. The requirements for nomination include displaying courage on or off the field, including overcoming an injury or physical handicap, preventing a disaster or living through hardship.

Previous winners of the FWAA's Courage Award are Michigan State offensive lineman Arthur Ray Jr. (2011), Rutgers defensive tackle Eric LeGrand (2010), the University of Connecticut football team (2009), Tulsa's Wilson Holloway (2008), Navy's Zerbin Singleton (2007), Clemson's Ray Ray McElrathbey (2006), the Tulane football team (2005), Memphis' Haracio Colen (2004), San Jose State's Neil Parry (2003) and Toledo's William Bratton (2002).

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About the Orange Bowl

The Orange Bowl is a 348-member, primarily-volunteer non-profit sports organization that promotes and serves the South Florida community. The Orange Bowl Festival features a year-round schedule of events culminating with the Discover Orange Bowl on January 1, 2013 and the Discover BCS National Championship on January 7, 2013. Other Orange Bowl core events include the MetroPCS Orange Bowl Basketball Classic, Orange Bowl Youth Football Alliance presented by Sports Authority, Orange Bowl International Tennis Championships, Orange Bowl Sailing Regatta Series and Orange Bowl Paddle Championships. For more information on the 2012-13 Orange Bowl Festival and its events, including promotional and volunteer opportunities through the Ambassador Program, log on to www.orangebowl.org.

The **Football Writers Association of America**, a non-profit organization founded in 1941, consists of more than 1,200 men and women who cover college football for a living. The membership includes journalists, broadcasters and publicists, as well as key executives in all the areas that involve the game. The FWAA works to govern areas that include gameday operations, major awards and its annual All-America team. For more information about the FWAA and its award programs, contact Steve Richardson at tiger@fwa.com or 972-713-6198.

2012 Discover Orange Bowl Courage Award Nominees

- **Sept. 26: Daniel Rodriguez, Clemson**
- **Oct. 3: Angelo Richardson, Arizona State**
- **Oct. 10: Patience Beard, Arkansas**
- **Oct. 17: Neiron Ball, Florida**
- **Oct. 31: Dan Werner, Mississippi**