

FWAA, Orange Bowl will honor Courage Award winner

The FWAA is teaming with the Fed Ex Orange Bowl to present the 2005 Courage Award to a worthy candidate in college football. The winner of the fourth annual Courage Award is expected to be announced in November.

Past winners of the Courage Award are Toledo running back William Bratton (2002), San Jose State returner Neil Parry (2003) and Memphis lineman Haracio Colen (2004).

Below are candidates for the 2005 award, which honors someone in college football on any level who shows great courage in the face of adversity. Candidates must display a courageous action on or off the field, overcome an injury or physical handicap, prevent a disaster or live through a lifetime of hardship.

The first three Courage Awards were sponsored by *ESPN The Magazine* before the Orange Bowl became the sponsor this fall.

2005 COURAGE AWARD NOMINEES
LANCE EVERSON, UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON, LINEBACKER: Was a non-qualifier out of high school in 2001, so he paid his own way to UH-Downtown, which is a separate campus from the University of Houston. He overcame a broken jaw during the spring of 2004 and the subsequent loss of 30 pounds and still was able to start the season opener against Rice later that fall. This past spring he suffered a devastating injury to his knee that required surgery, but he has rehabilitated his knee to the point

that the doctors, trainers and coaches feel he can contribute this fall, maybe around late October.

TULANE UNIVERSITY FOOTBALL TEAM: Completely uprooted from its New Orleans campus because of the destruction of Hurricane Katrina, the Tulane team has been a vagabond group, which first had to relocate to Jackson, Miss., then Dallas and finally Ruston, La., where the team has headquartered at Louisiana Tech during the entire first semester. Tulane has played home games at various sites around the state of Louisiana and one game in Alabama. Many of the players are without homes back in New Orleans and had the emotional turmoil of fearing for their friends and relatives' safety at the onset of their evacuation. Yet all the players, some of whom had only the clothes on their backs when they left New Orleans, have endured and focused on football.

BRANDON ROLLINS, ARKANSAS STATE, DEFENSIVE END: He was academically ineligible and sat out the 2002 season and was continuing his workouts in the weight room when tragedy struck. Brandon was in a dorms at ASU on the third floor preparing to take the elevator downstairs to wash his laundry. The doors opened without the elevator being there and Brandon plummeted three flights down the elevator shaft, shattering his body. His left side was decimated by the fall. Doctors advised Brandon to turn

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October 2005

Vol. 43, No. 4

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President's column



**ALAN
SCHMADTKE**

Long before anyone ever heard of the BCS, the axiom was forever fitting: football season brings surprises.

This year is no exception. Unfortunately, not all of the surprises are on the field. One of this year's is off it.

Just before the season got underway, Texas

Tech Coach Mike Leach informed his media of a return to an interview policy he put in place over the final weeks of last season. He and his assistant coaches were available for interviews during the week, but he would make only two players — quarterback Cody Hodges and cornerback Kahlid Naziruddin — for the rest of the season.

Texas Tech's media was not happy. The FWAA was not happy, either, and set a letter expressing its disappointment to Leach, his bosses at Texas Tech and to the Big 12.

Before Texas Tech's date with Florida International, Leach acquiesced a bit. Four players would be made available after games. Players can be requested by the media, but Leach retains right of approval over the foursome.

Four is better than two, but Leach shouldn't expect to make any media member's list of favorite coaches. That's the surprise. Leach's personality in many ways mirrors his offense, wide open and intriguing. He's also a good quote and has a sense of humor, two qualities that usually make a coach a media darling.

But Leach, who has a law degree from Pepperdine, has his calculating side. Which is where this media policy fits.

His reasons for the policy are familiar to anyone who has ever interviewed a coach. He wants to limit distractions. His team's fast finish in 2004 convinced him

the policy works.

Just before Texas' visit to Texas Tech last year, a Red Raiders player was quoted as saying the highly ranked Longhorns could not come to Lubbock and dominate Texas Tech. Final score: Texas 51, Texas Tech 21.

Enter the new media policy. Tech then won three of its final four regular-season games and accepted a bid to the Holiday Bowl, where it upset California.

Leach is not the first coach to limit media access to players, and he won't be the last.

Virginia media is fighting with Virginia Coach Al Groh and the limits he puts on access and his methods of disguising — or misspeaking about — injuries.

Purdue's Joe Tiller recently made quarterback Brandon Kirsch and safety Bernard Pollard off-limits because he didn't like the way either performed for reporters.

"We probably need to do a better job of coaching him (Kirsch) on that," Tiller told the *Indianapolis Star*.

Leach has his own complaint.

"I just don't like it when players talk about what they're going to do," he said in a phone conversation about his policy. "How do they know what they're going to do? I don't even know what they're going to do. I know what I'd like them to do. I know that's funny stuff to talk about, but it doesn't have anything to do with the game, and it's a distraction. I just want to minimize the distractions.

"I don't think that's so wrong."

It's not. Fact is, Leach has the right to run his program any way he sees fit. That means making players and coaches available when and where he wants.

But he and Texas Tech should keep this in mind as well: We get to do what we want as well. If that means shutting off coverage of Texas Tech football, then that's a result Leach and others have to be willing to live with.

Up for debate is who really gets hurt.

There's at least one group that might be celebrating Texas Tech's policy. The Red Raiders might have the most-quoted assistant coaches in America.

From the SID office: One school of thought on media guides

By **STEVE KIRSCHNER**
*Director of Athletic Communications,
University of North Carolina*

I must admit to chuckling somewhat when Tiger Richardson asked me to author a column on media guides. Somewhere along the way I seem to have become an unofficial spokesperson for the hot-button issue of reducing the number of media guide pages. I suppose that logically occurs when your athletic director is the one who initially proposed *eliminating* them.

Background: This all came about as a result of trips I made over several years to my athletic director's office with media guides in hand. I wanted to show him what our coaches were presenting to my staff with the idea that we, too, should be producing a 128-page men's (men's, not men's and women's) track brochure; and an 88-page women's soccer book for a program in its inaugural year, while our 18-time national champion program limped along with its 80-page brochure.

Some think I took one look at the Texas football media guide or the Missouri book and scoffed at the notion that a school would publish something in excess of 500 pages. Actually, I love the Texas book and have never even seen the Missouri one. I know Coach Brown liked what SID John Bianco produced for the Longhorns when Mack was here in Chapel Hill, and the book has gotten bigger and better since Mack went to Austin. Heisman Trophies, 10-win seasons and a massive fan base tend to warrant that.

I had no issue then or now with the size of football and basketball books, or other sports that draw extensive media coverage and fan support. I figure the competitive marketplace would identify which schools had the media interest, tradition and community following to produce whatever size book each school deemed necessary.

My issue was the exponential growth of most other Olympic sport brochures. In most SID offices, a number of people are available to produce the football and basketball books. Several people write and research the text and records and another person designs the brochure or the book is farmed out to a local graphics company.

However, with Olympic sports at most schools, the SID responsible for the brochure is likely doing most, if not all, of the writing and design, and is doing that for more than one sport. Our industry has countless interns and fulltime staff a few years out of college who handle multiple sports and are spending too much of their time chained to computers doing more graphic design work

than other forms of public relations. Or they are adding pages like travel itineraries to get better judging points in the annual CoSIDA swimsuit contest for media guides.

I value media guides as a public relations tool, which is why I asked my athletic director to support the withdrawal of the initial Atlantic Coast Conference proposal that stood to eliminate them. My AD was the first to voice the possibility of supplanting the printed brochure with email, PDFs or black-and-white Xerox copies, but he also was the first to redirect the proposal once our office had a chance to advise him about the importance media guides play in media coverage, recruiting, fundraising and historical archives.

In my opinion, athletic communications personnel spend far too much time working on media guides and not enough time communicating with the media, getting to know their coaches and student-athletes, preparing for and learning crisis management, dealing with all the various constituents that interact with athletic programs, etc.

My objection to media guides was never rooted in finances. I agree with SIDs who say this is an arbitrary and misguided way for athletic departments with \$40 million or \$50 million budgets to save \$10,000 to \$15,000. To me, it's about public relations, human resources and the extraordinary percentage of time (day and night) SID offices spend producing media guides. (Although having been a part of our athletic department's budget process, \$10,000 to \$15,000 is a pretty big deal to Olympic sport programs living on the edge.)

I have never met a student-athlete who selected Carolina because of the SIZE of the media guide. In fact, student-athletes I have approached on this subject have laughed at me. I have met more kids who were more stressed out about whether or not they would be able to wear their high school number than whether the recruiting section met to their satisfaction.

I think the 208-page limit is low for football and a bit low for basketball. We've had to cut 128 pages for men's basketball, which certainly has a remarkable history with Dean Smith, Michael Jordan, four NCAA titles and so on. When I first sat down this summer to scale back the book, I highlighted all the pages both the media and the coaches could live without. I cringed when I marked through some of them, but I knew I could put them on our Internet site, TarHeelBlue.com, or print them out for the media. To my surprise, when I got through marking the book, I actually eliminated 150 pages and was able

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Blaudschun: Football Writers shouldn't vote in Harris poll

By **MARK BLAUDSCHUN**
Boston Globe

One of the axioms of the business for young reporters used to be that you are here to cover the news not be part of it.

Apparently that no longer applies in the world of the BCS. I used to be an Associated Press football voter, back when the AP poll and the coaches' poll were tools used for arguments over a few adult beverages and little else. The bowls picked the teams they wanted; the polls crowned their national champions, and if the two top teams happened to meet in a bowl game, so much the better.

Not any more. Now we have the BCS and we have the writers' polls, the coaches' poll and the Harris poll, which is the new kid on the block in terms of a BCS spot.

The writers' poll pulled out of the mix at the end of last season. The coaches didn't want to be the only human element in the selection process. So the Harris poll was created with former coaches, administrators and writers, and early on, at least, a son in-law.

No women are voting in the Harris poll, but that's another issue.

My issue is writers who are members of the FWAA and voters in the Harris poll. Are you listening, Blair?

Wrong. Wrong. Wrong. The potential conflict of interest is very real. Now the argument you hear is: "How is this different than the AP poll of last season in which the writers had a huge say in who plays in the BCS games?"

It isn't. And that is why I no longer vote in the AP poll and other FWAA members shouldn't.

All you had to do was see the grief received by writers who covered the University of Texas and voted in the AP Poll last year. As Texas went on a campaign to prove it was more worthy than California of a BCS berth.

It is a different ball game now, with bowl berths

worth \$17 million potentially being decided by how a few writers vote.

And if that writer is covering the team that is involved in the process and his vote costs that school a BCS bid, and the fans hear about it — and they will — the writer then becomes part of the news, rather than covering the news.

And that is wrong.

Everyone should have freedom of choice. But sometimes common sense needs to kick in to the process.

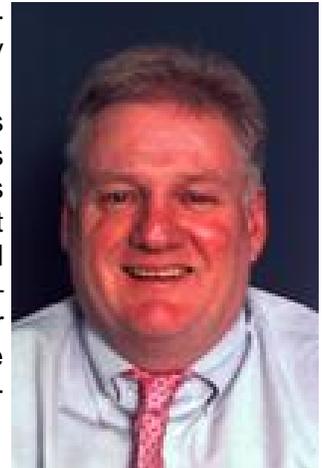
In a perfect world, we would have a playoff system. And the polls in football would be like they are in college basketball, a source of amusement and little else.

But the lords of college football won't do that. They won't even select a committee that could digest the polls as information and then have its members make up their own minds.

No it is 1/3, 1/3, 1/3, computers, coaches and Harris poll. For the members of the FWAA on the Harris poll panel, the answer to any question about their interest in voting should be a simple two word answer.

No thanks.

(Mark Blaudschun covers national college football for The Boston Globe. He was President of the FWAA in 1999. In the past, he voted in the FWAA's Grantland Rice Super 16 Poll, which is not included in the BCS formula.)



Mark Blaudschun

Kerkhoff: Writers have always made news by voting in polls

By **BLAIR KERKHOFF**
Kansas City Star

The call came from the Harris folks in mid-summer, and the dialogue dripped with drama.

Them: "Want to vote in the poll?"

Me: "Okay, but let me check with the boss."

The conversation with the boss was equally dramatic.

Me: "I've been asked to vote in this new poll."

Him: "Okay."

To be honest the boss, being a boss, had a few more questions, but the salient point was this process is no different than voting in the media polls, which, over the years I've done, we've all done, for Division I-A and I-AA football, men's basketball and high schools.

But apparently we're approaching the end of civilization as we know it. Yep, we're risking a Planet of the Apes future because voting in polls is — do those quotation marks with your fingers — "making the news."

Now, in your best Charlton Heston: "Damn you. Damn you all to hell." Only, you don't see the top of the Statue of Liberty but a piece of the Rose Bowl buried in the sand.

If I had only known, I'd have given that Harris request another five seconds of consideration.

And still said yes.

This just in, Bernie Bierman's Minnesota Golden Gophers received the final No. 1 ranking in the Associated Press poll for 1936, and the voters have been making news every football weekend since then.

They made it in 1947 when Notre Dame was voted the final No. 1 team. Polling didn't include bowls then, which ticked off No. 2 Michigan because the Wolverines had just walloped Southern Cal in the Rose Bowl. A recount was demanded and received.

They made it after the 2003 season by keeping Southern Cal atop the AP poll even though the Trojans didn't play in the BCS title game. I saw an AP staffer smile for an AP photographer while handing

Pete Carroll the AP trophy and was fairly certain that wasn't for the company newsletter.

Journalists vote for the Heisman Trophy and every other major award in college football, and all of sports and halls of fame for that matter.

Thank goodness. Who better to make these conclusions than journalists?

We're impartial, independent, responsible, and strive to be fair and accurate. I know this because if you're not those things you're not *in* the business.

We're having this discussion because a few voters didn't think California beat Southern Mississippi by enough to keep Texas ranked behind the Golden Bears last December. It made for a last-minute switch in the bowls, a rather common occurrence.

That's why the AP took its poll and went home? That's why newspaper editors folded their arms, furrowed their brows and prevented writers from participating in voting?

I'm blaming editors because I know football writers like Mark are smarter than this.

Sure, some conditions have changed. The money is obscene, and the BCS can't get out of its own way sometimes. And I was hoping for a few more media types on the Harris poll and much less attention to the release of the voters' names.

But that doesn't change the way I think about polls and today I think Southern Cal is the nation's best team. Whoever wants access to that opinion is welcome to it.

(Blair Kerkhoff, president of the FWAA in 1997, covers national colleges and the Big 12 for the Kansas City Star. He votes in the Harris poll.)



Blair Kerkhoff

LSU's season buffeted by winds of hurricanes

By MIKE GRIFFITH
Knoxville News-Sentinel

The powerful winds and rains of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita made for the most bizarre month of college football in LSU history.

After having their Sept. 3 opener with North Texas postponed to Oct. 29, the Tigers found calm in the desert when the LSU-Arizona State game was moved from Baton Rouge to Sun Devil Stadium in Tempe.

The setting and hospitality the weekend of Sept. 10 was more in line with what the Fiesta Bowl offers its teams each January than any type of regular season game.

Fiesta Bowl President John Junker and Vice President of Public Relations Shawn Schoeffler relished the opportunity to step up their efforts. Suddenly, it became obvious why the Fiesta Bowl continually gets top reviews and is easily the best run BCS bowl.

"When we knew they were talking about moving the game, we wanted to be involved for the betterment of college football," Schoeffler said. "It just makes sense for us to do this. It's a tough situation for LSU and their players, faculty and administration."

The Fiesta Bowl paid for LSU's hotel rooms, meals, bus transportation and meeting rooms, and the game proceeded to raise \$1 million for the hurricane relief fund.

The Phoenix area also rallied around the event. Police and safety personnel put in hours of uncharged overtime in support of game-day activities.

A thrilling 35-31 LSU victory capped the much-needed feel-good week for the Tigers. The days leading up to the game had been anything but ordinary, as Blackhawk helicopters swirled in the skies of Baton Rouge with the LSU's campus playing a central role in support and relief efforts.

Players were afforded few luxuries, what with distractions and traffic congestion by day and rooms crammed with relatives and friends at night.

Inconvenient doesn't begin to describe the circumstances LSU was forced to deal with prior to their arrival in the Fiesta Bowl oasis.

Unfortunately, a mere three weeks later when Hurricane Rita reared itself in the gulf coast waters, LSU's home game with Tennessee didn't come off as smooth

as the Arizona State contest.

LSU officials were understandably desperate for a return to normalcy. Instead, there were more complications.

On Thursday of game week, a call between Tennessee, LSU and SEC Commissioner Mike Slive led to the game being postponed to Monday night.

With some Friday flights into Baton Rouge cancelled on account of the weather and hotels bursting at the seams with evacuees and emergency workers, fans scrambled to find alternate means of transportation and lodging.

The Volunteers opted to fly in on game day rather than displace support personnel by arriving the night before.

"The hurricane itself created so many issues and problems that we looked at it that everybody was inconvenienced," SEC spokesman Charles Bloom said. "We went through the scheduling options and there just weren't many. From our point of view, we wanted to make sure the game was played without taking from the community."

Media were also at a disadvantage, as renovations to the LSU press box were incomplete.

"There were no television sets, no replays, no public address system," said Chris Low of the *Nashville Tennessean*. "There was a guy walking around with a chalkboard after a score, with drive information. It made for a tough work environment, especially with a four-hour night game that went into overtime.

"The people at LSU did the best they could with what they had, but the press box just wasn't ready for a game like that."

Fire Watchers (their shirts were marked with "FW") patrolled the press box levels and adjacent suites because fire alarm systems weren't functioning adequately.

"The hurricane didn't directly affect the facility, but it affected how many workers we had available to finish the project," LSU associate athletic director Herb Vincent said. "The glass that was supposed to be going in was to be supplied by New Orleans Glass -- as far as we know, New Orleans Glass doesn't exist anymore.

"When everyone around you, and every part of your business is affected, normal goes out the window. It was a bizarre month, for sure."

FWAA Courage Award nominees (continued)

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his back on football. He sat out 2003 but played last fall and is listed as a second-string left end this fall.

LAMAR HERRON, OREGON STATE, FREE SAFETY: His mother died of cancer in April 2001 and his father died of a heart attack seven months later. He was the man of the house at age 12 with his father away. Herron took care of his ailing mother and younger sister before his mother died. At 16, Lamar lived out of a suitcase, moving in first with a teammate, then a Natomas assistant coach, and finally with Joe Daniels, a rival coach in the same conference who now is the head coach at Natomas. But he overcame all of this and played at Oregon State in 2004.

THOMAS PARKER, FLORIDA ATLANTIC, WIDE RECEIVER: Parker was part of the initial recruiting class at Florida Atlantic. His career was rapidly developing until he stopped one summer night to help a stranded motorcyclist. While helping, he was hit by an on coming car. His jaw and elbow were broken. He returned to the field a year later, not able to fully extend his arm, but has worked very hard. In the spring of 2005 his mother passed away and he was forced to withdraw from school to help take care of his family. He returned this summer and has worked all summer and preseason, not knowing whether the NCAA would grant him a sixth season. That came through just five days before the first game.

WALI LUNDY, VIRGINIA, RUNNING BACK: Wali Lundy, the youngest of four brothers, grew up without parents. When he was three, his father died at age 30 from a stroke, while his mother passed away from breast cancer just three years later. Wali and his brothers were raised by their grandparents. In addition to all the passings, Lundy had health problems as a youngster. At age four, he was rushed to the hospital with appendicitis and endured emergency surgery. As an eighth grader, Lundy had another surgery for an intestinal block in his bowels, one that would save his life. He has focused on school work and football.

DELJUAN ROBINSON, MISSISSIPPI STATE, DEFENSIVE LINE: Robinson, who originally signed with MSU in 2002, did not enroll that fall because of open heart surgery in August 2002. He joined the Bulldogs for the opening of the 2003 season, but had tragedy strike once again. Robinson's brother, Jerrell, was killed in an

automobile accident. Despite those setbacks, Robinson played in 11 of the Bulldogs' 12 games during the 2003 season.

VICTOR HARRIS, VIRGINIA TECH, CORNERBACK: Suffered third-degree burns on the day Tech coach Frank Beamer was coming to his house for a recruiting visit. He has small scars on his face, skin grafts on his hip and, of course, that marred right forearm. His left forearm really tells the story. There lies the tattooed image of his mother's face. Ten days after Beamer's visit, five days after Harris committed to the Hokies, Maritza Harris died. She fainted at home on Christmas Day and passed away at the hospital. She was 43.

RAY LAMB, TEMPLE, DEFENSIVE BACK: Completed a miraculous comeback last season when he was in the starting lineup versus Florida A&M on Sept. 18. Lamb suffered a torn anterior cruciate ligament in his right knee just five months earlier during the Cherry & White spring game on April 24, 2004. Initially, a doctor's prognosis placed Lamb's return for summer 2005 after Lamb underwent surgery on May 20.. His hard work and dedication gradually moved-up his return date and he started six games.

CHRIS CARLISLE, USC, STRENGTH COACH: He learned he had Hodgkin's Disease in December 2000, began radiation treatments in Tennessee (where he was still the Volunteers' associate strength and conditioning coach) and was hired by USC in February 2001. He kept his illness a secret except to Trojan head coach Pete Carroll while continuing treatments in Tennessee and at USC/Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center and Hospital. Doctors told him in the summer of 2001 that the cancer was in remission. He informed the USC players of his ordeal at the start of fall 2001 camp.

MIKE TEPPER, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, OFFENSIVE LINEMAN: Sustained broken fibula and torn ankle ligaments when he stepped in front of a car to protect a female Cal volleyball player who was being harassed by men in the car. The car ran over Tepper on purpose, and two men were arrested.

North Carolina SID explains his stand on size of media guides

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to put 22 back.

For years, we added pages to the history, records and recruiting sections because we had the means to do so. However, our program existed quite nicely before we added a page on all of our 100-point games or gave every one of our 40 former players who has an honored jersey their own page.

Now that we are designing the basketball book, I wish we had 16 more pages, but we'll make do with 208. I did check with our beat writers and coaches to see what they could work without. We've kept most, but certainly not all, of the history and records section, eliminated the opponent section except for key contact information and tightened the book in other areas.

Football has more than 100 student-athletes, the largest coaching staff, (in most cases) the oldest history and an extensive records section. In most schools, it requires a larger book, and I hope that is addressed before next year.

Where do I hope this goes? Well, if I had the power to make the rules (please stop laughing now!) I would consider capping football at 272, basketball at 224, and schools could designate one other men's and women's program to each be 128 pages. All other sports would be capped at 64 pages.

Regardless, when changes are inevitably made, I hope a group of athletic directors, SIDs, coaches and (gasp) media will have a chance to meet to discuss common points of concern before legislation is submitted or enacted.



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