



Postseason to be marked by new award, All-America banquet

The FWAA moves into one of the busiest times of the year in coming weeks — awards season.

And this year there will be a new FWAA award and All-America banquet.

On Page 2, brief biographies of the splendid candidates for the first FWAA/ESPN Magazine Courage Award are provided. Seven people have been nominated for the award, the winner of which will be announced in the December issue of the magazine. The Courage Award Trophy will be presented to the winner at the FWAA's awards breakfast on Jan. 3 in Tempe.

The award goes to a person who has shown great courage in the sport in the face of adversity. The winner will be determined by a committee of FWAA members.

Elsewhere in this Fifth Down, on Page 3, is the announcement that Florida Citrus Sports, a nonprofit foundation that runs and helps support two bowls, a regular-season football game and an all-star game, will sponsor a banquet honoring the 25-man FWAA All-America team. The banquet is Jan. 24 in Orlando.

And speaking of the All-America team, the FWAA All-America Com-

mittee will choose the team during two conference calls on Nov. 18 and Nov. 25. The names of the members of the committee and the conferences they cover have been on-line and printed in the last two Fifth Downs. If you have any input about players who should be on the team please contact the appropriate writer in your region.

Five finalists for the Bronko Nagurski Trophy (best defensive player, to be announced Dec. 9 in Charlotte, N.C.) and three finalists for the Outland Trophy (best interior lineman, to be announced Dec. 12 in Orlando) will emerge from the All-America team.

The FWAA-Eddie Robinson Coach of the Year Award will be open for the entire membership to vote upon. Three coaches, as determined by FWAA officers, will be placed on a ballot in mid December to allow for the completion of the regular season. FWAA members will have until the morning of Jan. 4 to vote for the winner, who will be announced on Jan. 9 in Phoenix

Steve Richardson
FWAA Executive Director

November 2002

Vol. 40, No. 5

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Courage award nominees

WILLIAM BRATTON

Tailback, Toledo

Diagnosed with a blood disorder (a combination of sickle-cell and thalassemia) at age 8, Bratton has endured a life of chronic and sometimes debilitating pain. During his career he has overcome the difficulties of being a partial qualifier, has waited his turn to become the starting tailback and, in an Oct. 26 game against Miami of Ohio, suffered a fractured ankle that could end his season (he says he hopes to return by the final regular season game on Nov. 30). And then there is the sickle thalassemia, which can — and has — required that Britton be hospitalized for days at a time as the disease reduces him to tears or to holding his breath as the pain moves throughout his body. For the season, Britton has rushed for 639 yards on 114 carries (5.6 average) and scored 10 touchdowns.

DEWAYNE WHITE

Defensive end, Louisville

White was 2 months old when his father died and 8 years old when his stepfather was paralyzed after being shot in the back during an altercation at a night club. Two months later the family's trailer home in Marbury, Ala., burned down, leaving the family with nothing. They eventually scraped up enough money to buy a small house, but it burned down when White was 11. Three years later, White's mother was diagnosed with bone cancer. White worked on farms and at a local Dairy Queen while also becoming a high school basketball and football star. His mother died when he was 16. After he tore a knee ligament in a basketball game during his senior year, Louisville was the only Division I-A program to pursue him. He'll leave the school as one of its most decorated players and is a lock to be selected high in the 2003 NFL Draft.

JOHN TURNTINE

Defensive tackle, Texas Christian

Turntine was 8 years old when his mother was murdered. He didn't see eye-to-eye with his father and moved from place to place until his sophomore year of high school, when he moved in with two of his teachers. Then Valerie Dekine, whose daughter he was dating, became his guardian and took him into her home. Turntine majored in secondary education and received his bachelors degree last summer and is now working on a masters degree in school administration. Because of the influence of his teachers in his life, he plans to teach for a few years and then hopes to become a principal or school superintendent. Despite the time demands of graduate school, playing football and having a family (he is married and has an infant daughter), Turntine does volunteer work in the Fort Worth community.

DERRICK NIX

Running back, Southern Mississippi

Nix rushed for more than 1,000 yards during his freshman and sophomore seasons at Southern Miss but suffered an ankle sprain four games into his junior season. He had an allergic reaction to anti-inflammatory medicine he was taking to combat the swelling. The reaction caused him to retain fluids, to say nothing of the more serious side-effect: blood clots and kidney problems. He redshirted last season, but the two-time all-Conference USA player has returned and entered his Oct. 30 game against TCU as the nation's 17th leading rusher, averaging about 117 yards per game and more than 6 yards per carry.

TRAVIS FREEMAN

Student Manager, Kentucky

Freeman contracted meningitis in his pre-teen years and has lost sight in both eyes. This is fourth year as a student manager. His duties are the same as the other managers: cleaning and repairing helmets, shoulder pads and shoes. He helps set up the practice field, prepares the jerseys and uniforms, and he does it with a good humor and enthusiasm that has made him a favorite with UK players and coaches. Despite his disability, Freeman played high school football. At UK, Freeman is president of the local chapter of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. He also carries a GPA of better than 3.0.

CHAD BRINKER

Running back, Ohio University

Early last season, Brinker was having some neurological problems that affected his vision and balance and caused horrific headaches. Team doctors determined that he had an arachnoid cyst, a plum-sized mass, lodged between his brain and the back of his skull. Brinker underwent surgery to have the cyst removed, returned to school for the winter quarter and returned to the track and football teams in the spring.

CHAD COOPER

Linebacker/Special Teams, Virginia Tech

Less than a year ago, Cooper lost 48 pounds in 23 days and couldn't walk. He had Guillian-Barré Syndrome, a disease of the nervous system that kills about 5 percent of its victims. Cooper fell ill right before Gator Bowl practices began and went to see the team doctor the next morning. The doctor immediately took Cooper to a hospital, where the diagnosis was confirmed. Cooper missed all of the spring semester but returned to work out with teammates in the summer. The fact that Cooper is playing in 2002 has been called "amazing" by two of his doctors.

Florida Citrus Sports to host FWAA All-America banquet Jan. 24

Florida Citrus Sports (FCS), the organizing group that produces the Capital One Bowl, Tangerine Bowl, Rotary Gridiron Classic and Florida Classic each season, has announced that it will bring another prestigious college football event to Orlando. The organization will host the Football Writers Association of America All-America Banquet beginning in January and continuing at least through the 2005 college football season.



"We feel hosting the Football Writers All-America team is a natural extension for our association," said FCS Executive Director Tom Mickle. "We have great respect for the Football Writers team and believe this will be another significant event for a community that simply loves college football. The support of the Orlando community for college football never ceases to amaze me."

The 25-player FWAA All-America team will be announced in December after its selection by a panel of nine FWAA members. The FWAA has selected an All-America team since 1944. The team has been featured in *Look Magazine* (1946-70) and later on the Bob Hope Christmas Special and on ABC-TV. It is the second oldest continuously published All-America team in college football.

"We believe Orlando is the perfect place to play host to the FWAA All-America team banquet," said FWAA Executive Director Steve Richardson. "For a number of years we have been looking for the right fit and now have it. In conjunction with the college football all-star game in the area, FWAA All-Americans in many cases will have more than one reason to make Orlando their stop in late January."

The FWAA All-America Banquet will take place during the week preceding the Rotary Gridiron Classic College All-Star Game. This season's banquet will be on January 24 at a site to be determined. The Rotary Gridiron Classic will be played the following day in front of a live national television audience on ESPN2.

Proceeds generated by the banquet will benefit

the charitable arm of FCS, the Florida Citrus Sports Foundation Summer Camp. Each year, the Foundation hosts two, four-week camp sessions for at-risk youth in the Orlando area. The camp provides its participants athletic activities and life-skills instruction in a structured environment.

The FWAA banquet represents the fourth college football event Florida Citrus Sports has brought to Orlando since 1997. That year saw the reemergence of the Florida Classic in Central Florida. The game, which pits Bethune-Cookman vs. Florida A&M, has turned into an annual sellout at the 65,438 seat Florida Citrus Bowl Stadium. In 1998, FCS introduced the Rotary Gridiron Classic, and in four short years the game has evolved into the nation's fastest growing college all-star game. Last fall, FCS brought the Micronpc.com Bowl from Miami, where it had spent 11 years, to Orlando and renamed it the Tangerine Bowl.

While the menu of events produced by FCS has seen an increase in recent years, the organization's roots date back to 1946, when Orlando's original bowl game was established. Today, that game is known as the Capital One Bowl.

Florida Citrus Sports is a private, not-for-profit membership organization that presents six signature events in its efforts to benefit the Florida Citrus Sports Foundation, community charities and educational institutions. The organization is based in Orlando, Fla., and its six signature events include the Capital One Bowl, Tangerine Bowl, Rotary Gridiron Classic College All-Star Game, Florida Classic, Florida Power Super Holiday Parade and the OUC Orlando Half Marathon & 5K.

Having recently celebrated its 60th year, the Football Writers Association of America consists of the men and women across North America 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 an All-America team.



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