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Contact: Steve Richardson
tiger@fwaa.com
972-713-6198

FIVE FINALISTS NAMED FOR 2013 BRONKO NAGURSKI TROPHY

DALLAS (FWAA) – Five finalists for the **2013 Bronko Nagurski Trophy** were announced on Thursday by the **Football Writers Association of America** and the **Charlotte Touchdown Club**.

Vying for the honor of National Defensive Player of the Year are, in alphabetical order: Michigan State cornerback **Darqueze Dennard**, Pittsburgh tackle **Aaron Donald**, Florida State cornerback **Lamarcus Joyner**, Alabama linebacker **C.J. Mosley** and Missouri end **Michael Sam**.

The winner will be announced on Dec. 9 and presented the Bronko Nagurski Trophy at a gala banquet at the Westin Hotel in Charlotte, N.C. Florida Coach Will Muschamp will give the keynote address.

In addition, the FWAA and Charlotte Touchdown Club will hand out the **Bronko Nagurski Legends Award** presented by Florida East Coast Railway. This year's winner is Georgia Tech defensive back **Randy Rhino**, a member of the FWAA's 1972 FWAA All-America team.

The FWAA award is named after Nagurski, who dominated college football at Minnesota as a bruising fullback and defensive tackle from 1927-29. He could have been an All-American at any position and was the best player wherever the coaches put him.

The FWAA has named a National Defensive Player of the Year since the 1993 season. One of the schools represented by the five finalists will win the award for the first time, although this is the third straight season Alabama has had a Nagurski finalist and Florida State has one for a second straight year.

Pittsburgh and Michigan State have secured their initial Bronko Nagurski finalists. Alabama has had four previous finalists, Florida State three and Missouri one. But none of those schools have had a player win the award.

A look at the five 2013 Bronko Nagurski Trophy finalists, as selected by the FWAA All-America Committee:

Darqueze Dennard, CB, Michigan State (5-11, 197, Sr., Dry Branch, Ga.): A shutdown corner who has dominated Big Ten offenses this season for the Spartans, who rank tops in the country in total defense. He has made 38 tackles (19 unassisted) and two for losses of four yards. His 2013 resume includes three interceptions (38 return yards), seven pass breakups, four quarterback hurries and one forced fumble.

Aaron Donald, T, Pittsburgh (6-0, 285, Sr., Pittsburgh, Pa.): Probably the most productive defensive tackle in college football. Offensive coordinators stay up at night scheming to keep him away from the ball. The agile tackle leads the country in tackles for loss (22.5 for 112 yards in losses) by a whopping 4.5 tackles. Of those tackles for loss, 10 have been sacks. He also has forced four fumbles, broken up two passes and hurried the quarterback 14 times.



Lamarcus Joyner, CB, Florida State (5-8, 190, Sr., Fort Lauderdale, Fla.): Another top cornerback who can impress for the nation's second-ranked team. He has 51 tackles (36 unassisted), 6.5 tackles for 54 yards in losses, one interception (15 yards returned). In addition he has three forced fumbles, three passes broken up and two quarterback hurries. He played his best in Florida State's 51-14 defeat of ACC power Clemson when he made eight tackles (one sack), collected an interception and forced two fumbles.

C.J. Mosley, LB, Alabama (6-2, 232, Sr., Mobile, Ala.): The leader of top-ranked Alabama's defense that has held eight of 10 opponents to 10 or fewer points this season. He has 79 tackles (42 unassisted), seven of those for 15 yards in losses. In addition, he has five pass breakups, four quarterback hurries and one forced fumble. Alabama ranks fifth in the country in total defense, allowing just 272.8 yards a game.

Michael Sam, E, Missouri (6-2, 255, Sr., Hitchcock, Texas): A flashy end who has the penchant for making the big play in the big game. In Missouri's upset victory at Georgia, he returned a fumble 21 yards for a score. In three games this season, against Arkansas State, at Vanderbilt, and against Florida, he has registered three sacks. Sam ranks tied for fifth nationally in tackles for loss per game (1.6) and is tied for sixth in sacks on the season.

The **Charlotte Touchdown Club** is a non-profit organization founded in 1990 for the purpose of promoting high school, collegiate, and professional football in the Charlotte, N.C., region. The club's activities and services focus community attention on the outstanding citizenship, scholarship, sportsmanship, and leadership of area athletes and coaches. For more information, contact John Rocco (704-347-2918 or jrocco@touchdownclub.com). The official website of the Charlotte Touchdown Club is www.touchdownclub.com.

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. 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.

The Bronko Nagurski Trophy is a member of the **National College Football Awards Association**. The NCFAA encompasses the most prestigious awards in college football. The 21 awards boast 678 years of tradition-selection excellence. Visit ncfaa.org to learn more about our story.

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