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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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FIVE FINALISTS NAMED FOR 2016 EDDIE ROBINSON AWARD

NEW YORK (FWAA) – The **Football Writers Association of America**, in conjunction with the **Allstate Sugar Bowl**, has announced five finalists for the **2016 Eddie Robinson Coach of the Year Award**. The winner of the award will be revealed on Dec. 15.

In alphabetical order, the finalists are: Western Michigan's **P.J. Fleck**, Penn State's **James Franklin**, Colorado's **Mike MacIntyre**, Washington's **Chris Petersen** and Alabama's **Nick Saban**.

"This is an especially strong field of candidates," said FWAA President Mark Anderson of the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*. "Each one of these coaches could win the award and probably would in most other seasons. They all set the bar extraordinarily high, and whoever does win Eddie Robinson Coach of the Year will further honor the great man for whom we present this award."

The only previous winner in the group is Saban, who has his team poised for a fifth national title in eight years. He claimed the FWAA Coach of the Year Award previously in 2008 (at Alabama) and in 2003 (at LSU), when the Tigers claimed a piece of the national title. Petersen has been a four-time finalist while at Boise State in 2006 and '08, '09 and '10.

The finalists have been placed on a ballot, which has been sent to the entire FWAA membership. Ballots will be accepted through Friday at 5 p.m. ET.

The official presentation reception will be on Jan. 7, 2017, in Tampa, where the winning coach will be handed the FWAA/Eddie Robinson Coach of the Year bust during a reception in conjunction with the College Football Playoff National Championship.

The FWAA has presented a coaching award since the 1957 season when Ohio State's Woody Hayes was named the first recipient. The award is named for the late Robinson, a coaching legend at Grambling State University for 55 seasons.

Robinson, who passed away on April 3, 2007, won 70.7 percent of his games during his illustrious career. Robinson's teams won or tied for 17 Southwestern Athletic Conference (SWAC) championships after joining the league in 1959. His Tigers won nine Black College Football Championships during his career spent all at the same school.

The 2016 Eddie Robinson Coach of the Year finalists:

P.J. Fleck, Western Michigan: The former NFL player and assistant coach has taken the Broncos (13-0) to their first unbeaten regular season in school history and back-to-back-to-back bowl appearances for the first time. The Broncos have scored a school record number of points (566) this season and were the last team in the country to commit a turnover. The Mid-American Conference champions are headed to the Goodyear Cotton Bowl to face Wisconsin.

James Franklin, Penn State: After a 2-2 start, the Nittany Lions won nine straight games to win the Big Ten Conference in Franklin's third season in Happy Valley. The Nittany Lions rallied from a 21-point deficit to beat Wisconsin, 38-31, in the Big Ten title game. During the nine-game winning streak, Penn State was the only team to beat College Football Playoff-bound Ohio State. Franklin will take Penn State to the Rose Bowl



Game to play USC.

Mike MacIntyre, Colorado: The Buffaloes had won only two of their previous 27 Pac-12 Conference games prior to this season, when they won eight league games to claim the South Division title. The Buffaloes were picked to finish last in the South, but won ten games for the first time since 2001. The son of former college head coach George MacIntyre has authored perhaps the best turnaround story in college football this season.

Chris Petersen, Washington: After 8-6 and 7-6 seasons which produced minor bowl trips for the Huskies, Petersen's team has made a breakthrough nationally, earning a spot in the College Football Playoff with a 12-1 record. Still one of the younger teams in the Pac-12, the Huskies defeated Colorado, 41-10, in the Pac-12 title game to win their first league title since 2000. The Huskies, whose lone loss was to Rose Bowl-bound USC, face Alabama in a College Football Playoff semifinal.

Nick Saban, Alabama: He has put together a continuing dynasty in Tuscaloosa, Ala., where the Crimson Tide is vying for its fifth national title in eight years. Alabama is currently riding a 25-game winning streak, the longest in the FBS. The nation's top-ranked team team dominated the SEC with an unbeaten record (13-0) led by one of the nation's best defenses. Alabama begins its quest to repeat as national champions in the Chick-fil-A Peach Bowl vs. Washington.

The **Allstate Sugar Bowl** has established itself as one of the premier college football bowl games, having hosted 27 national champions, 88 Hall of Fame players, 47 Hall of Fame coaches and 17 Heisman Trophy winners in its 82-year history. The 83rd Allstate Sugar Bowl Football Classic, featuring teams from the Big 12 and the SEC, will be played on January 2, 2017. In addition to football, the Sugar Bowl Committee annually invests over \$1.3 million into the community through the hosting and sponsorship of sporting events, awards and clinics. Through these efforts, the organization supports and honors over 25,000 student-athletes each year, while injecting over \$2.5 billion into the local economy in the last decade. For more information, visit www.AllstateSugarBowl.org.

The **Football Writers Association of America**, founded in 1941, consists of 1,400 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 game-day operations, major awards and its annual All-America team. For more information about the FWAA and its award programs, contact Steve Richardson at tiger@fwaa.com.

The Eddie Robinson Award is a member of the **National College Football Awards Association (NCFAA)** which encompasses the most prestigious awards in college football. The 22 awards boast more than 700 years of tradition-selection excellence. Visit ncfaa.org to learn more about our story.