

HEAVY METAL: THE NCFAA NEWSLETTER (OCT. 19)

BEDNARIK AWARD – Nation’s defensive player of the year Next key date: Semifinalists named Tue., Oct. 29

Israel Mukuamu of South Carolina (#24, So., Bossier City, La.) had a career-high three interceptions in last week’s upset at Georgia, taking the first one back 53 yards for a touchdown in the Gamecocks’ 20-17 overtime win. Mukuamu’s (pronounced moo-KWAW-moo) third interception stopped Georgia’s first overtime possession, and the defensive back is the first South Carolina player since 1988 to have three picks in a game. His four interceptions lead the SEC and was the award’s Player of the Week for Oct. 12 games.

BILETNIKOFF AWARD – Nation’s outstanding receiver regardless of position Next key date: Semifinalists announced Mon., Nov. 18

LSU receiver **Justin Jefferson** (#2, Jr., St. Rose, La.) continues to surge up the national leaderboard with 40 receptions off his 46 targeted passes. Jefferson is seventh nationally in yards per game (115.6), tied for 16th in receptions (16), seventh in yards (670) and 12th in receptions per game (6.7). Oklahoma wide receiver **CeeDee Lamb** (#2, Jr., Richmond, Texas) had a career-high 10 catches for 171 yards and three touchdowns last week vs. Texas, and has scored a touchdown in eight straight games dating back to the 2018 Big 12 Championship, tied for the second-longest streak in school history. Lamb is tied for the national lead with 10 touchdown receptions.

BRONKO NAGURSKI TROPHY – Nation’s top defensive player Next key date: Finalists named Wed., Nov. 20

Two of the nation’s best pass rushers are due to clash next week. **Zach Baun** of Wisconsin (#56, Sr., Brown Deer, Wis.) is the stalwart on a defense that leads the nation in scoring defense (4.8 ppg), total defense (173.7 ypg), rushing defense (44.7 ypg) and passing defense (129.0 ypg) after posting their fourth shutout of the season last Saturday. Wisconsin is the first Big Ten team since Michigan in 1962 to record four shutouts in its first six games of a season and is allowing 60 fewer yards per game than any other team. **Chase Young** of Ohio State (#2, Jr., Upper Marlboro, Md.) leads the nation’s second-best defense, and has 29 quarterback pressures on 127 pass-rushing snaps and is grading out at 96.7 percent, according to Pro Football Focus. Young led the country in total pressures last year.

BURLSWORTH TROPHY – Most outstanding player who began his career as a walk-on Next key date: Semifinalists named Tue., Nov. 12

Hunter Renfrow of Clemson was presented with his 2018 Burlsworth Trophy prior to the kickoff of the Florida State game Saturday. A video of the ceremony is on line: <http://bit.ly/31uykqG>. The deadline for submitting nominations for the 2019 Burlsworth Trophy is Wed., Oct. 30.

BUTKUS AWARD – Nation’s best linebacker Next key date: Semifinalists named Mon., Nov. 4

Oklahoma linebacker **Kenneth Murray** (#9, Jr., Missouri City, Texas) was all over the field last week against Texas, registering five solo tackles, two tackles for loss and a sack. He set the tone for the OU defense that held the Longhorns to 310 yards and 4.2 yards per play. Murray helped the Sooners tie a school record with nine sacks and their 15 tackles for loss were their second most ever against Texas. It was Murray’s sixth career game with at least 2.0 tackles for loss.

DAVEY O’BRIEN AWARD – Nation’s best quarterback Next key date: Semifinalists named Wed., Nov. 13

Southern Miss quarterback **Jack Abraham** (#15, Jr., Oxford, Miss.) threw for over 400 yards for the third time in his career and the second time this season, completing 29-of-36 passes for 421 yards and three touchdowns with no interceptions in a 45-27 victory over North Texas. He also added a rushing score while helping USM generate 563 yards of total offense. Abraham had completions of 72, 59 and 59 yards and at one point completed six consecutive passes for double-digit yards. The 421 passing yards is the sixth-highest total in school history. Abraham has thrown for 1,936 yards this season and has completed 71.7 percent of his passes (eighth in the FBS).

DOAK WALKER AWARD – Nation’s premier running back Next key date: Semifinalists named Wed., Nov. 20

Minnesota’s **Rodney Smith** (#1, Sr., Jonesboro, Ga.) has been a force in the Gophers’ ascension this season. Smith totaled 237 all-purpose yards against Illinois two weeks ago and now has three games in his career with at least 237 all-purpose yards. He is one of four players (joining Tutu Atwell, Tellis Redmon and Chris Darkins) in Minnesota’s history to have three games with at least 237 all-purpose yards, but he is the only player in school history to do so against three Big Ten teams. Smith’s 4,879 all-purpose yards (3,634 rushing, 485 receiving and 760 kick return) are second in school history.

HEISMAN TROPHY – Nation’s most outstanding player Next key date: Finalists announced. Dec. 9

The Nissan Heisman House Tour is at Oklahoma this weekend to honor the 50th anniversary of **Steve Owens** winning the Heisman Trophy. The 1969 Heisman Trophy winner and former OU athletics director will sign autographs Saturday at the Nissan Heisman House, which will be open from 8-11 a.m. located at Niemann Field, which is at the intersection of Jenkins Avenue and 4th Street (just south of the Jenkins Avenue Parking Facility). Owens will appear from 9 to 10:30 a.m.

JOHN MACKEY AWARD – Nation’s most outstanding tight end Next key date: Semifinalists announced Mon., Nov. 18

ULM tight end **Josh Pederson** (#86, Jr., Morristown, N.J.) leads the Warhawks (3-3) in receptions (24) and touchdown receptions (five) and is second in receiving yards (288), all of them a career high. Of his 24 receptions, 18 of them (75 percent) have resulted in a first down or a touchdown, and he has caught a touchdown pass in four of his last five games. ULM plays at Appalachian State in a key Sun Belt Conference game Saturday.

LOU GROZA AWARD – Nation’s top placekicker Next key date: Semifinalists announced Thu., Nov. 7

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Kent State sophomore **Matthew Trickett** (#95, So., Cleveland, Ohio) kicked four field goals for the second time this season in the Golden Flashes' 26-3 road win over rival Akron last week that put Kent State in first place in the MAC's East division and brought the coveted Wagon Wheel back to Kent. Trickett converted from a season-long 45 yards to go along with two kicks from 43 and one from 36 yards out as part of a 14-point game.

MAXWELL AWARD – Nation's player of the year..... Next key date: Semifinalists named Tue., Oct. 29

Jalen Hurts (#1, Sr., Houston, Texas) carried the ball 17 times for 131 yards for Oklahoma last week, the most rushing yards by an OU quarterback ever against Texas and a Cotton Bowl Stadium collegiate record by a quarterback that included a three-yard fourth-quarter touchdown. He was 16-for-28 passing for 235 yards with three touchdowns and an interception and finished with 366 yards of total offense (or 61 yards more than Texas).

OUTLAND TROPHY PRESENTED BY NFID – Nation's most outstanding interior lineman.... Next key date: Semifinalists named Wed., Nov. 20

Washington's offense faces its stiffest test Saturday against Oregon and will lean on its veteran center **Nick Harris** (#56, Sr., Inglewood, Calif.) for an offense averaging 423.1 yards per game (57th nationally). Harris has started at center in every game except at Arizona and in 14 of the last 16. The Huskies have been especially strong on the short field with a .906 success rate in red-zone offense that is second in the Pac-12 (32nd nationally). A fast start is essential for Washington – through seven games, UW has outscored its opponents 90-6 in the first quarter.

PAUL HORNUNG AWARD – Most versatile player in college football..... Next key date: Finalists announced Thu., Nov. 14

Kentucky's **Lynn Bowden Jr.** (#1, Jr., Youngstown, Ohio) moved from receiver to starting quarterback and led the Wildcats to a 24-20 come-from-behind home win over Arkansas. Filling in due to injuries to the team's top two quarterbacks, Bowden threw a touchdown pass and scored twice on the ground, including the game-winning touchdown run of 24 yards late in the fourth quarter. He finished with 78 passing yards and 196 yards rushing and returned a punt.

PAYCOM JIM THORPE AWARD – Nation's best defensive back..... Next key date: Semifinalists announced Mon., Oct. 21

No one is playing defense better than the Big Ten, where four of the top five national total defense leaders reside. Ohio State's **Jeffrey Okudah** (#1, Jr., Grand Prairie, Texas) caught plenty of attention with a highlight interception while on the ground against Nebraska, but the cornerback's three interceptions and three pass breakups has had foes' attention all season. Minnesota safety **Antoine Winfield** (#11, So., The Woodlands, Texas) is also performing at elite standards with two interceptions, six QB pressures and 11 total defensive stops.

RAY GUY AWARD – Nation's best punter Next key date: Final candidates list announced Tue., Nov. 5

Adam Korsak of Rutgers (#94, Jr., Melbourne, Australia) was once again named the Punter of the Week leading off the Ray's 8 list. Korsak punted 10 times against Indiana for a total of 473 yards with a net of 46.5 yards due to only two punt returns of eight yards. Four of his punts ended up inside Indiana's 20 and he had a long punt of 68 yards. For the year, Korsak has landed 20 of 41 punts inside the 20 with only one touchback.

RIMINGTON TROPHY – Nation's premier center Next key date: Finalists named Mon., Dec. 9

Temple (5-1) continues to impress in the American Athletic Conference heading into a big game at SMU on Saturday. The Owls are 39th in the nation in total offense at 446.5 yards per game, led up front by junior center **Matt Hennessy** (#58, Bardonia, N.Y.). According to Pro Football Focus' pass-blocking grades, Hennessy has allowed just one pressure on 253 snaps and his run-blocking grade is 8.0 points ahead of second place.

WALTER CAMP AWARD – Nation's most outstanding player Next key date: Semifinalists announced Thu., Nov. 21

Oklahoma wide receiver **CeeDee Lamb** (#2, Jr., Richmond, Texas) had 10 catches for 171 yards and three touchdowns of 51, 27 and 1 yard in the Sooners' 34-27 win over Texas in the annual Red River Showdown to become the first OU receiver to earn the offensive National Player of the Week honor. South Carolina cornerback and safety **Israel Mukuamu** (#24, So., Bossier City, La.) had three interceptions, including one he returned 53 yards for a touchdown, as the Gamecocks upset third-ranked Georgia, 20-17. Mukuamu also had 11 tackles, seven of them solo.

WILLIAM V. CAMPBELL TROPHY – Nation's premier scholar-athlete Next key date: Finalists announced Wed., Oct. 30

The National Football Foundation and College Hall of Fame has announced the 185 semifinalists for the 2019 William V. Campbell Trophy Presented by Mazda. Use this link to view the full release and list of semifinalists: <http://bit.ly/2019CampbellSemifinalists>.

WUERFFEL TROPHY – Exemplary community service and academic achievement..... Next key date: Semifinalists announced Tue., Nov. 5

2014 Wuerffel Trophy recipient **Dr. Deterrian "D.T." Shackelford** will be the keynote speaker at the 2020 Buck Smith Fellowship of Christian Athletes Breakfast on Feb. 7, 2020 at The Raider Arena at Northwest Florida State College in Niceville, Fla. More than 1,800 local high school and middle school athletes are expected to attend. This weekend, two Wuerffel Trophy nominees who are punters square off when Ole Miss junior **Mac Brown** hosts Texas A&M and senior **Braden Mann**.

– Compiled by Scott Farrell of collegepressbox.com

The **National College Football Awards Association** encompasses the most prestigious awards in college football. Founded in 1997, the NCFAA and its 25 awards now boast over 800 recipients, dating to 1935. Visit ncfaa.org to learn more about our story. Contact: Mark Wolpert, President (mwolpert@maxwellfootballclub.org or 267-973-3680).