

HEAVY METAL: THE NCFAA NEWSLETTER (DEC. 12)

BEDNARIK AWARD – Nation's defensive player of the year ... The Maxwell Football Club [announced three finalists](#): Auburn DT **Derrick Brown**, Clemson LB **Isaiah Simmons** and Ohio State DE **Chase Young**. Brown (Sr., Sugar Hill, Ga.) is one of the nation's most disruptive players, with 12.5 tackles for loss and 4.0 sacks along one of its top defensive fronts. Simmons (Jr., Olathe, Kan.) has 7.0 sacks and 14.0 TFLs and spearheads a defense that leads the country in total defense (244.7) and scoring defense (10.6). The Tigers held eight of 13 opponents to 10 points or less. Young (Jr., Upper Marlboro, Md.) is a fearsome edge presence and is second in the nation with 21.0 tackles for loss. Young could become only the second winner of both the Bednarik and Maxwell Awards (Manti Te'o, Notre Dame, 2012).

BILETNIKOFF AWARD – Nation's outstanding receiver regardless of position ... The Tallahassee Quarterback Club Foundation [announced its three finalists](#): **Ja'Marr Chase** of LSU, **CeeDee Lamb** of Oklahoma and **Michael Pittman Jr.** of USC. Chase (So., Harvey, La.) leads the nation in receiving yards (1,498), yards per game (124.8) and touchdowns (18). Lamb (Jr., Richmond, Texas) boosts the country's No. 2 offense with 20.8 yards-per-catch (7th nationally, as well as total yardage at 1,208) and 100.7 yards per game (11th). Pittman Jr. (Sr., Woodland Hills, Calif.) paired with freshman QB Kedon Slovis to help USC rebound from a 3-3 start to a Holiday Bowl berth with 1,222 yards (6th nationally) and a 100.8-yard average (10th nationally).

BRONKO NAGURSKI TROPHY – Nation's top defensive player ... The FWA and the Charlotte Touchdown Club named **Chase Young** [as its winner](#) on Monday. Young is Ohio State's second winner following LB James Laurinaitis in 2006, and the Buckeyes' first defensive lineman. The nation's sack leader (16.5) also leads in sack yardage (117 yards) at the helm of a defense that finished the regular season as the country's top unit allowing 232.2 yards per game. The 16.5 sacks are the Ohio State record for a single season and the most by a Big Ten player in 21 seasons.

BROYLES AWARD – College football's top assistant coach ... The [2019 winner is Joe Brady](#), LSU's passing game coordinator and wide receivers coach, who accepted the honor from the Frank and Barbara Broyles Foundation at Tuesday's luncheon. Brady, in his first year at LSU, is the 24th recipient of the award as the top-ranked Tigers prepare for their first College Football Playoff. Brady helped create the nation's most explosive attack that leads the country in total offense (554.3), is second in passing offense (386.8) and third in scoring offense (47.8), and setting school season records for total yards (7,206) and passing yards (5,029).

BURLSWORTH TROPHY – Most outstanding player who began his career as a walk-on ... Michigan State senior DE **Kenny Willekes** was [named the 2019 winner](#) by the Brandon Burlsworth Foundation on Monday. Willekes (Sr., Rockford, Mich.) entered the program as a walk-on linebacker in 2015 but continued to emerge into one of the top pass rushers in the nation. The chemistry major earned a scholarship in the spring of 2017 and has 49.5 career tackles for loss, an MSU record. He became just the third Spartan DE to earn first-team All-Big Ten honors twice and is the first MSU defensive player to be named team MVP twice.

BUTKUS AWARD – Nation's best linebacker ... The Butkus Foundation announced **Isaiah Simmons** [as its 2019 winner](#) on Sunday in a surprise presentation during the team's College Football Playoff Selection Show watch party. Simmons (Jr., Olathe, Kan.), the ACC Defensive Player of the Year, finished the regular season with the team lead in tackles (84), tackles for loss (14.0) and sacks (7.0) while adding six pass breakups, an interception, a forced fumble and a fumble recovery. He added nine tackles and an interception in the Tigers' 62-17 win over Virginia in the ACC Championship Game. Simmons is Clemson's first winner in the award's 35-year history and is the first ACC winner since Boston College's Luke Kuechly in 2011.

DAVEY O'BRIEN AWARD – Nation's best quarterback ... The Davey O'Brien Award [announced its three finalists](#): **Joe Burrow** of LSU, **Justin Fields** of Ohio State and **Jalen Hurts** of Oklahoma. Burrow (Sr., Athens, Ohio) is the first QB in SEC history to throw for 4,000 yards and 40 touchdowns in a season and led the Tigers to wins over five top-10 teams. Fields (So., Kennesaw, Ga.) accounted for 50 total TD's this season and is within four of Dwayne Haskins' Big Ten record set last year. He has 40 TD passes and just one interception. Hurts (Sr., Houston, Texas) is all over the national leaderboard in multiple categories, most notably leading the nation in yards per attempt (11.8; the FBS record is 11.6), pass efficiency rating (200.3; the single-season FBS record is 199.4) and is fourth in completion percentage (.718; the Oklahoma record is .709 by Baker Mayfield in 2016). Hurts averages 279.5 passing yards and 96.5 rushing yards per contest.

DISNEY SPIRIT AWARD – Nation's most inspirational player, team or figure ... Minnesota holder **Casey O'Brien** is the 2019 winner. O'Brien (So., St. Paul, Minn.) has overcome four bouts of cancer to play college football. He was first diagnosed with osteosarcoma, a rare form of bone cancer, when he was a freshman in high school. Doctors told him his football playing days were over, but he knew differently. After his diagnosis, O'Brien moved from quarterback to holder and has thrived. He made his collegiate debut this year at Rutgers when he held on Minnesota's final three PATs and would also hold three more times in a win against Maryland.

DOAK WALKER AWARD – Nation's premier running back ... The nation's top three rushers [are the finalists](#) for the award: **J.K. Dobbins** of Ohio State, **Chuba Hubbard** of Oklahoma State and the 2018 winner, **Jonathan Taylor** of Wisconsin. Hubbard, Taylor and Dobbins are 1-2-3 in yards per game, with Hubbard well ahead (161.3) of the other two (Taylor at 146.8 and Dobbins at 140.7). Dobbins (Jr., La Grange, Texas) is the first Ohio State player to rush for 1,000 yards as a freshman, sophomore and junior. Hubbard (So., Sherwood Park, Alberta) has topped 200 yards four times this season and is also the national leader in all-purpose yards (180.1). Taylor (Jr., Salem, N.J.) is second in all-purpose yards, has four 200-plus yard games and can become the award's third two-time recipient (Ricky Williams in '97 and '98; Darren McFadden in 2006 and '07).

EDDIE ROBINSON AWARD – National Coach of the Year ... The Football Writers Association of America, in conjunction with the Allstate Sugar Bowl, [announced nine finalists](#) for the award on Tuesday. Among the nine finalists are three previous finalists and three of the four head coaches headed to the College Football Playoff: **Ryan Day**, Ohio State; **Elijah Drinkwitz**, Appalachian State (now at Missouri); **Sonny Dykes**, SMU; **P.J. Fleck**, Minnesota; **Bryan Harsin**, Boise State; **Mike Norvell**, Memphis; **Ed Orgeron**, LSU; **Matt Rhule**, Baylor; and **Dabo Swinney**, Clemson. This is the third consecutive season for Swinney to be a finalist and the fifth time overall (also 2015 and '11). Fleck was a finalist in '16 at Western Michigan and Harsin was a finalist in '14 at Boise State.

GEORGE MUNGER AWARD – Division I Coach of the Year ... The Maxwell Football Club [announced six finalists](#) for its 2019 award that includes all four coaches in the upcoming College Football Playoff: **Ryan Day** of Ohio State, **P.J. Fleck** of Minnesota, **Ed Orgeron** of LSU, **Matt Rhule** of Baylor, **Lincoln Riley** of Oklahoma and **Dabo Swinney** of Clemson, the only previous winner (2015) among the six.

HEISMAN TROPHY – Nation's most outstanding player ... The finalists for the 85th trophy were unveiled on Monday: **Joe Burrow**, **Justin Fields**, **Jalen Hurts** and **Chase Young**. All four finalists are in the College Football Playoff. Burrow is LSU's first finalist since Tyrann Mathieu in 2011 and would be its second winner. Fields, who transferred from Georgia before the 2019 season, and Young give Ohio State and seven all-time finalists. Ohio State is the fifth school to have multiple finalists in the same year since finalists were first invited to New York in 1982. Young is just the fourth defensive lineman finalist, joining Steve Emtman ('91), Warren Sapp ('94) and Ndamukong Suh ('09). Hurts, who transferred from Alabama before the 2019 season, marks the fourth straight year Oklahoma has had a finalist, including the last two winners (Baker Mayfield '17 and Kyler Murray '18) and would be the fifth Oklahoma QB to win. Hurts is OU's 11th overall finalist and a national-best 10th since 2000. The first three of the Sooners' record-tying seven winners were running backs, the last four have been quarterbacks.

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JOHN MACKEY AWARD – Nation's most outstanding tight end ... **Harrison Bryant** of Florida Atlantic became the first player in the 19-year history of the Owls' program to earn a national individual accolade when he was named the John Mackey Award winner on Wednesday. Bryant (Sr., Gray, Ga.) leads all tight ends nationwide with 65 catches and 1,004 receiving yards and is fourth in the FBS with seven touchdowns, each of them in the last six games. Bryant is just the third Owl to surpass 1,000 receiving yards in a season, the third C-USA tight end to ever reach that plateau, and he is the first player from a Group of 5 school to receive the John Mackey Award.

LOU GROZA AWARD – Nation's top placekicker ... The Palm Beach County Sports Commission [named its three finalists](#): Georgia's **Rodrigo Blankenship**, Iowa's **Keith Duncan** and Washington State's **Blake Mazza**. Blankenship (Sr., Marietta, Ga.) became the Bulldogs' career scoring leader with 23 field goals (out of 26) that ties for the FBS lead. He has hit three from 50-plus yards. Duncan (Jr., Weddington, N.C.) leads the nation with 27 field goals – four more than the next closest kicker – to set the Big Ten single-season record. A dozen of those kicks have come from 40-plus yards, most in the nation. Mazza (So., Plano, Texas) has an FBS-best 94.7 percent accuracy (18-19) among kickers with multiple field goals from beyond 50 yards. He has scored 112 points this season.

MAXWELL AWARD – Nation's player of the year ... The Maxwell Award announced **Burrow, Hurts** and **Young** as its finalists. Burrow, whose passer rating of 201.47 is second in the country, would be LSU's first winner. Hurts, who leads the nation in total offense (376.1) and is tied for the national lead in points responsible for (23.7) and TD's accounted for (51), would give Oklahoma two winners in the last three years (Mayfield, '17). Young would be Ohio State's first Maxwell winner.

OUTLAND TROPHY PRESENTED BY NFID – Nation's most outstanding interior lineman ... The FWAA named two offensive linemen – center **Tyler Biadasz** of Wisconsin and tackle **Penei Sewell** of Oregon – and defensive tackle **Derrick Brown** of Auburn as the three finalists for the trophy presented by the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID). Biadasz is Wisconsin's fifth finalist – all of them on the offensive line – and its first since 2010. Sewell is Oregon's second all-time finalist, joining defensive tackle Haloti Ngata in 2005, but the Ducks have yet to claim an Outland winner. Brown is Auburn's first finalist since 2014 and its sixth all-time. He is the Tigers' third defensive tackle to be a finalist, joining 1988 Outland winner Tracy Rocker and Zeke Smith, who won the Outland in 1958.

PAUL HORNING AWARD – Most versatile player in college football ... Kentucky's **Lynn Bowden Jr.**, a prolific all-purpose receiver and return specialist who led the Wildcats to a 5-2 record while filling in at quarterback, was named the award winner by the Louisville Sports Commission on Tuesday. In 2019's first five games, Bowden (Jr., Youngstown, Ohio) averaged 11.6 yards per reception, 13.3 yards per punt return and 25 yards per kickoff return. When injuries decimated UK's quarterback ranks, he moved to quarterback, learned a read-option offense during an open week in the schedule and led the Wildcats to five wins in the next seven games with a bowl game yet to play. At quarterback, Bowden rushed for 1,136 yards, 8.2 yards per carry, and scored 11 touchdowns, including four scores in a 45-13 victory over rival Louisville to close out the regular season. On the season, Bowden posted 2,166 total yards and accounted for two touchdowns passing, one receiving and 11 rushing, including scoring runs of 64, 46, 33, 32 and 24 yards.

PAYCOM JIM THORPE AWARD – Nation's best defensive back ... The Oklahoma Sports Hall of Fame revealed its three finalists: LSU safety **Grant Delpit**, Ohio State cornerback **Jeff Okudah** and Georgia defensive back **J.R. Reed**. Okudah (Jr., Grand Prairie, Texas) has spearheaded a pass defense that is No. 2 nationally (148.1 yards per game). He has three interceptions, two forced fumbles and seven pass breakups. OSU's two other Thorpe Award winners were Malcolm Jenkins (2008) and Antoine Winfield (1998). Reed (Sr., Frisco, Texas) leads a defense that is second nationally giving up 12.5 points per game and is No. 4 in the nation in total defense at (274.2 ypg). Georgia has allowed just a single rushing touchdown. Delpit (Jr., Houston, Texas) earned first team All-SEC honors for the second straight year and is fourth on the team with 56 tackles to go along with 3.0 tackles for loss, one sack and two pass interceptions.

RAY GUY AWARD – Nation's best punter ... The Augusta Sports Council named its three finalists: **Max Duffy** of Kentucky, **Sterling Hofrichter** of Syracuse and **Dane Roy** of Houston. Duffy (Jr., Perth, Australia) leads the nation with 48.6 yards per punt and is UK's all-time leading career punter (46.5 yards). A three-year team captain, Hofrichter (Sr., Valrico, Fla.) has punted 69 times this season with a gross average of 43.9 and a net average of 42.8. He leads the ACC with 29 punts downed inside the 20 with just two touchbacks, and he's booted 22 balls of 50-plus yards. Roy (Sr., Bunyip, Australia) is sixth nationally in average (46.9) and helped Houston to a 43.6 net punting average, second among all FBS teams. Only two of his 54 punts were touchbacks.

RIMINGTON TROPHY – Nation's premier center ... The award announced its three finalists on Monday: **Tyler Biadasz** of Wisconsin, **Matt Hennessy** of Temple and **Creed Humphrey** of Oklahoma. Biadasz (Jr., Amherst, Wis.) is a consensus first-team All-Big Ten center who pushed the Badgers to gain more than 300 rushing yards in five games. His 40 consecutive starts span the career of RB Jonathan Taylor, who leads the country in scoring (26 TD's) and has rushed for more yards (6,080) in three seasons than any player in FBS history. Hennessy (Jr., Bardonia, N.Y.) is a team captain who has allowed only four total pressures and no sacks this season, while helping freshman RB Re'Mahn Davis to a team-leading 900 rushing yards. Humphrey (So., Shawnee, Okla.) is a redshirt sophomore on an offense that leads the nation with 8.2 yards per play and 11.4 yards per pass attempt. In 799 plays this season, Humphrey has posted 93 knockdowns without allowing a sack.

WALTER CAMP AWARD – Nation's most outstanding player ... Two QB's (**Burrow** and **Fields**), two RB's (**Hubbard** and **Taylor**) and **Young**, a DE, are the five finalists. Second in the nation in passing efficiency (201.5), Burrow has thrown for 4,715 yards and 48 TD's and would be LSU's first winner. Fields has accounted for 50 touchdowns (40 passing, 10 rushing) and would be Ohio State's fifth winner and first since Troy Smith in 2006. Hubbard is the nation's rushing leader (1,936) and has scored 21 touchdowns and could match Barry Sanders (1988) as the Cowboys' only winners. Taylor is the nation's second-leading rusher (1,909) and has scored 26 touchdowns (21 rushing, 5 receiving) for the Rose Bowl-bound Badgers (10-3), who also boast Ron Dayne (1999) as a winner.

WILLIAM V. CAMPBELL TROPHY – Nation's premier scholar-athlete ... Oregon quarterback **Justin Herbert** was named the 30th recipient of The William V. Campbell Trophy Presented by Mazda during Tuesday's NFF Annual Awards Dinner. While maintaining a 4.01 GPA, Herbert (Sr., Eugene, Ore.) has been selected as the back-to-back Football Academic All-American of the Year while ranking in the top two in nearly every Oregon passing category. He is the Ducks' first Campbell Trophy recipient and their third NFF National Scholar-Athlete. He is set to graduate this month with a degree in science and plans to attend medical school one day. Each of the 12 finalists claimed an \$18,000 scholarship for their postgraduate educations.

WUERFFEL TROPHY – Exemplary community service and academic achievement ... The winner is **Jon Wassink**, a three-year starter at QB for Western Michigan. Wassink (Sr., Grand Rapids, Mich.) carries a 3.95 GPA in the Haworth College of Business, majoring in Accountancy. He is a two-time Academic All-MAC selection, a two-time MAC Distinguished Scholar-Athlete and a member of the Dean's List each semester. He volunteers as a 4-year leader at Tree of Life (youth mentoring), leading weekly Bible studies in FCA, volunteering with Uplifting Athletes, feeding the homeless in Kalamazoo and is a regular mentor at Indian Lake Elementary School and visitor at Bronson Children's Hospital. He joins Tim Hiller (2009) as a WMU Wuerffel winner; only WMU and Oklahoma have had multiple winners.