

# HEAVY METAL: THE NCFAA NEWSLETTER (OCT. 9, 2020)

## **Bednarik Award – nation's defensive player of the year**

The Maxwell Football Club awarded West Virginia defensive tackle **Darius Stills** (#56, Sr., Fairmont, W.Va.) with its National Player of the Week honor after he posted a career-high 3.5 tackles for loss with 2.5 sacks in the Mountaineers' 27-21 overtime win over Baylor. Stills, a Bednarik Watch List member, had three solo stops among his four tackles and has feasted in the last two matchups with the Bears with 14 combined tackles, 6.5 TFL's and 5.5 sacks. On the season Stills has 4.5 TFL's, tied for 18th nationally, and 2.5 sacks as part of seven total tackles.

## **Biletnikoff Award – nation's outstanding receiver regardless of position**

North Texas senior **Jaelon Darden** (#1, Sr., Houston, Texas) is tied for the national lead with six TD's (with Florida TE Kyle Pitts) and is climbing the UNT career receiving charts. His 25 career TD's are second in school history, only six behind the record. He caught 13 passes for 104 yards and a TD against Southern Miss last week and enters the week with 179 career receptions, fifth all-time at UNT. The return of SMU WR **Reggie Roberson** (#8, Sr., DeSoto, Texas), the country's yardage leader (474) and seventh-leading receiver (118.5 ypg) is in question after he left the Mustangs' 30-27 win over Memphis last week. An apparent non-contact knee injury sent him to the locker room in the middle of a career game – to that point his five catches went for 243 yards, the No. 3 all-time yardage mark at SMU, and two TD's.

## **Bronko Nagurski Trophy – nation's top defensive player**

Arkansas linebacker **Bumper Pool** (#10, Jr., Lucas, Texas) notched a career-best 20 tackles last week as the Razorbacks won at Mississippi State, 21-14. Pool's 20 stops are the single-game high in the FBS this season and earned him the award's National Defensive Player of the Week. Pool is the national leader in tackles (15.5 tpg) and his 31 total tackles (12 solo) are tied for ninth. He is one of only nine SEC players in the last 10 years to register 20 or more tackles in a game. Florida Atlantic linebacker **Leighton McCarthy** (#13, Sr., Apopka, Fla.) had career highs of three sacks, four TFL's and 10 tackles in the Owls' 21-17 win over Charlotte, a win which he helped preserve with a forced fumble in the fourth quarter. Virginia Tech defensive end **Emmanuel Belmar** (#8, Sr., Suwanee, Ga.) had a career-high three sacks in a 38-31 win at Duke, which the Hokies' front held to 3.8 yards per carry.

## **Burlsworth Trophy – most outstanding player who started his career as a walk-on**

The Burlsworth Trophy has pushed the dates forward for all nominations, now due by November 18. The top 10 finalists will be announced on Dec. 1 with the three finalists being announced on Dec. 8. The Burlsworth Trophy ceremony will be Dec. 21.

## **Butkus Award – nation's best linebacker**

The nation's two leading tacklers are currently linebackers at Southern Miss and Arkansas. Southern **Hayes Maples** (#32, So., Hattiesburg, Miss.) led the Golden Eagles (1-3) to their first win with 10 stops (five solo) last week, 41-31, at North Texas. Maples, the total tackles leader with 38, was bolstered by a career-high 15-tackle game a week earlier in a loss at Tulane – the school's highest tackle count since 2014. Arkansas' **Bumper Pool** (#10, Jr., Lucas, Texas) had 20 stops at Mississippi State, the single-game high in the FBS this season. Pool's 15.5 tackles per game lead the nation by average (on 31 total). He became one of only nine SEC players in the last 10 years to register 20 or more tackles in a game.

## **Davey O'Brien Award – nation's best quarterback**

The Davey O'Brien Foundation announced SMU quarterback **Shane Buechele** (#7, Sr., Arlington, Texas) as its National Quarterback of the Week after he threw for a career-high 474 yards on 32 completions with three TD's in the Mustangs' 30-27 win over No. 25 Memphis. Buechele's fourth 400-yard career effort marked the third-highest total in SMU's history and his career-best 501 total offense yards were second all-time. He gives SMU, the first team to reach 4-0, the nation's leading passer with 1,326 passing yards (171 yards ahead of second) as well as its third-leading rusher. Buechele's 10 TD's tie for second as do his 96 completions and he's thrown multiple TD passes in 14 of his past 16 games. SMU is idle this week. Joining Buechele among the award's Great 8 last week were: Ole Miss' **Matt Corral**, TCU's **Max Duggan**, Alabama's **Mac Jones**, N.C. State's **Devin Leary**, Coastal Carolina's **Grayson McCall**, Tulsa's Zach Smith and BYU's **Zach Wilson**.

## **Doak Walker Award – nation's premier running back**

**Khalil Herbert** (#21, Gr., Fort Lauderdale, Fla.) has electrified No. 18 Virginia Tech's 2-0 start with consecutive 100-yard games, rushing for 207 yards and two TD's last week in a 38-31 win at Duke, the fifth-highest single-game total in Tech's history. The Kansas transfer had 104 yards in the opening win over N.C. State and leads the country in rushing at 155.5 ypg. Herbert's 357 all-purpose yards against Duke broke the school record (adding 150 kick return yards) and he's now the nation's all-purpose yardage leader (276.5 ypg) as Tech plays a key game Saturday at No. 8 North Carolina. UAB senior **Spencer Brown** (#4, Sr., Warrior, Ala.) ran for 144 yards in a win over

# HEAVY METAL: THE NCFAA NEWSLETTER (OCT. 9, 2020)

UTSA last week, marking his 16th career 100-yard rushing game and the third of UAB's (3-1) four games. Brown is second nationally in yardage with 450 yards and broke a 73-yarder against UTSA. Rushing has been a key part of the Blazers' prowess in the red zone; they've scored 16 touchdowns in 18 red zone trips thus far.

## Heisman Trophy – nation's most outstanding player

Five of the top six quarterbacks nationally in yards per game hail from the SEC this week. Numbers three and four face off Saturday when Alabama's **Mac Jones** (#10, Jr., Jacksonville, Fla.) takes on Ole Miss' **Matt Corral** (#2, So., Ventura, Calif.). Jones had a career game last week in a 52-24 win over Texas A&M, throwing for 435 yards and four TD's (both career bests) and completing 74.1 percent of his throws. He's fourth nationally at 342.0 ypg and has quickly developed into a weapon by leading the nation in passer rating at 250.9; he averaged 21.75 yards per completion against the Aggies. Corral, third in the nation at 357.5 ypg, is also third in passing efficiency at 211.9. His seven TD passes in Ole Miss' first two games are the Rebels' best in back-to-back SEC games since 2012.

## John Mackey Award – nation's most outstanding tight end

Boston College's promising 2-1 start has been buoyed by an underrated force as it prepares for a key ACC game Saturday, hosting Pitt (3-1). Last year tight end **Hunter Long** (#80, Jr., Exeter, N.H.) led BC with 509 receiving yards – 65 percent of the Eagles' passing totals – and 18.2 yards per reception on an offense built to ride the rushing of NFL-bound AJ Dillon. Long has opened 2020 as quarterback Phil Jurkovec's favorite target and leads the nation's tight ends and is fifth among all receivers with 8.3 receptions per game. He's been a consistent first-down-maker in BC's three games – of his 25 receptions, 11 have gone for more than 10 yards. Long had only 32 receptions combined in his first two seasons at BC.

## Lou Groza Award – nation's top placekicker

The Palm Beach County Sports Commission recognized three kickers as its Stars of the Week. In Iowa State's first home win (37-30) over Oklahoma since 1960, Cyclones kicker **Connor Assalley** (#96, Sr., Naperville, Ill.) scored 13 points on field goals of 35, 32 and 26 yards to go with four PAT's. Assalley has connected on 11 straight field goals, currently the second-best mark all-time at ISU. SMU transfer kicker **Chris Naggars**' 43-yarder with nine seconds left gave the Mustangs a 30-27 win over No. 25 Memphis, its first win over the Tigers in seven seasons. Naggars (#34, Sr., Arlington, Texas) is 7-for-7 on the season, the third-best mark in the nation, and his 42 points leads all kickers and tied for second nationally. TCU's **Griffin Kell** (#39, So., Arlington, Texas) – who succeeded Naggars as the starting kicker at Arlington High School – led the Frogs to a 33-31 road win at Texas with four field goals (27, 32, 49, 28), more makes than his entire freshman season. The 15-point game tied for the ninth-best kicking performance in TCU history.

## Maxwell Award – nation's player of the year

Alabama quarterback **Mac Jones** (#10, Jr., Jacksonville, Fla.) posted dynamic stats in the second start of his junior season and sixth overall, a 52-24 win over Texas A&M. Jones passed for a career-high 435 yards – the fourth-highest mark in Crimson Tide history – on 20-for-27 passing with another career-best four TD's. He finished with a passer rating of 250.9, 16.1 yards per attempt and 21.8 yards per completion against the Aggies. His three TD's of 85 yards or more, including an 87-yarder to Jaylen Waddle against A&M, are the most by any Alabama quarterback.

## Outland Trophy – nation's most outstanding interior lineman

Much has been made in the SEC's first two weeks about its high-flying aerials. So quick, who leads the SEC in rushing? It's Kentucky – by almost 90 yards per game – and its two Outland Trophy Watch List members up front. Despite an 0-2 start, center **Drake Jackson** (#52, Sr., Versailles, Ky.) and right tackle **Darian Kinnard** (#70, Jr., Knoxville, Tenn.) have the Wildcats clicking at a best-in-the-SEC 276.5 rushing yards per game that's also fifth in the nation. That's 6.2 yards per play on the ground, and they'll use it to shorten the game Saturday when they host Mississippi State and its new Air Raid offense. Virginia Tech is third nationally in rushing offense at 319.0 ypg running behind Watch List left tackle **Christian Darrisaw** (#77, Jr., Upper Marlboro, Md.). In his 24th consecutive start last week, Darrisaw led Tech past 300 rushing yards in consecutive games for the first time since 2002 in its win over Duke. Tech averaged 6.5 yards on 50 rushing attempts to post 324 yards on the ground.

## Paul Hornung Award – most versatile player in college football

Two running backs and a wide receiver who are also special teams catalysts earned the weekly Paul Hornung Award Honor Roll this week. UCF senior RB/WR **Otis Anderson** (#2, Sr., Jacksonville, Fla.) ran for 84 yards and a TD and caught four passes in the Knights' home loss to Tulsa, adding a punt return. Coastal Carolina senior RB **CJ Marable** (#1, Sr., Decatur, Ga.) touched the ball three different ways, scoring twice as the Chanticleers topped Arkansas State, 52-23. Marable ran 15 times, had four receptions and handled a kickoff return. Alabama WR **Jaylen Waddle** (#17, Jr., Houston, Texas) scored on an 87-yard reception as part of a five-reception, 142-yard

# HEAVY METAL: THE NCFAA NEWSLETTER (OCT. 9, 2020)

day, ran one time and returned a punt 11 yards as the Crimson Tide beat Texas A&M.

## **Paycom Jim Thorpe Award – nation's best defensive back**

TCU safety **La’Kendrick Van Zandt** (#20, Jr., Henderson, Texas) helped lead a 33-31 road upset of No. 9 Texas, registering a career-high seven tackles, one interception and a tackle for loss to earn the award's Player of the Week honor. Van Zandt also made a highlight play with a game-saving tackle (to that moment) late in the fourth quarter, chasing down and then tackling a Texas player from behind inside TCU's 5-yard line. Clemson cornerback **Andrew Booth Jr.** (#23, So., Dacula, Ga.) had two pass breakups and a highlight-reel one-handed interception, each key plays in the Tigers' win over Virginia. At 6-0, all of Booth's defensive plays came in coverage against Virginia targets listed at 6-7.

## **Ray Guy Award – nation's best punter**

The Augusta Sports Council awarded **Lucas Dean** of UTSA as its Punter of the Week. Dean punted six times during the Roadrunners' 21-13 loss at UAB with a net average of 45.0 yards without a return. Five of his punts ended up inside UAB's 20-yard line and he had a long punt of 55 yards. In addition to Dean, Ray's 4 this week included 2019 winner **Max Duffy** of Kentucky, **Isaac Power** of Baylor and James Smith of Cincinnati.

## **Rimington Trophy – nation's premier center.**

How do you know Georgia's first-year starting quarterback Stetson Bennett is off to a good start? Because the usually ground-based Bulldogs (2-0) sit at 38th nationally running the ball with only 161.5 ypg. That's still third in the SEC, and center **Trey Hill** (#55, Jr., Warner Robbins, Ga.) has Georgia cranking out 414.5 ypg in a balanced attack that's seventh in the SEC in rushing and passing. No. 3 Georgia hosts No. 14 Tennessee on Saturday. Clemson center **Cade Stewart** (#62, Gr., Six Mile, S.C.) powered the Tigers blockers to rack up 466 total yards in a 41-23 win over Virginia, including another 300-yard passing game by quarterback Trevor Lawrence. Stewart graded out at 94 percent with four knockdown blocks. The watch list for the award will be released next Wednesday.

## **Walter Camp Award – nation's most outstanding player**

**Zach Wilson** of BYU scored five TD's (two passing, three rushing) in No. 22 BYU's 45-14 win over Louisiana Tech and earned the National Offensive Player of the Week honor. Wilson (#1, Jr., Draper, Utah) completed 24-of-26 passes for 325 yards and rushed for 43 yards. He's the first BYU player to earn the offensive award since 2009. Clemson linebacker **Baylon Spector** (#10, Gr., Calhoun, Ga.) notched a career-high 14 tackles, more than doubling his previous high of six from last year's Fiesta Bowl against Ohio State, to earn the Defensive Player of the Week nod. Four of his tackles were solo, including 1.5 TFL's and a half-sack.

## **William V. Campbell Trophy – nation's premier scholar-athlete**

The National Football Foundation & College Hall of Fame (NFF) announced an all-time record of 199 semifinalists for the 2020 William V. Campbell Trophy Presented by Mazda, establishing an exciting new highwater mark for one of college football's most coveted awards. Celebrating its 31st year, the NFF will announce 12-to-14 finalists in November, and each of them will receive an \$18,000 postgraduate scholarship as a member of the 2020 NFF National Scholar-Athlete Class Presented by Fidelity Investments. Later this year, one member of the class will be declared as the winner of the 31st Campbell Trophy Presented by Mazda, having his postgraduate scholarship increased to \$25,000 and receiving his own 25-pound-bronze version of the iconic statue.

## **Wuerffel Trophy – exemplary community service and academic achievement**

Four Wuerffel Trophy nominees will be on opposite sides of the ball Saturday in two of the nation's feature games. Miami linebacker **Zach McCloud** (#53, Sr., Lantana, Fla.) will look to stop Clemson running back **Darrien Rencher** (#21, Sr., Anderson, S.C.) when the teams clash at 7:30 p.m. ET on ABC. In the annual Red River Showdown, Oklahoma senior linebacker **Caleb Kelly** (#19, Sr., Fresno, Calif.) faces Texas quarterback **Sam Ehlinger** (#11, Sr., Austin, Texas) at 11 a.m. CT on FOX.