

LEADER OF THE PACK

Marshall Faulk's remarkable numbers once again are grabbing the Heisman spotlight. But will he survive the process?



DON LIEBIG, THE DAILY AZTEC, SAN DIEGO STATE U.

Marshall Faulk was always content to spend his afternoons dodging linebackers on his way to the end zone — until somebody noticed he was good at it.

So these days Faulk is running for college football's most prestigious award, fielding more airtime than footballs along the way. As he is learning, a dash for the Heisman Trophy can mean more than running with the ball, snagging passes and throwing blocks.

"Making phone calls and interviews and television can wear you out, but we try to work around that with football practice and the game when it best suits me," says Faulk, who led the nation in rushing and scoring last season as a freshman at San Diego State U.

This year Faulk is a candidate for the Heisman Trophy, a national award given annually to the country's best player, which means less time for things like... football.

"Sometimes you want to do other things and go out with the fellas, but I've got to do interviews and make phone calls," says Faulk, a running back for the Aztecs.

Russell White, the senior tailback at the U. of California, Berkeley, knows about those phone calls, too. White, who was named first team All-America by the Football Writers Association and second team All-America by the Associated Press last season, is a Heisman Trophy candidate for the Golden Bears.

"All this media attention takes a little bit of an effect on the mind and the body," White says. "It's very time consuming. It takes time away from academic things I could be doing. But in order to win the big one, you must do it."

The nation's most prestigious football award, after all, isn't just about football.

"Not only do they have to be an outstanding player on the field, they have to have a strong character and good judgment in what they say and how they carry themselves all the time," says Linda Venzon, sports information director at the U. of Miami. "They're looked at under the microscope from the beginning of the season to the end of the season in every aspect of their life. It's kind of like being a politician."

It all started with John Heisman, the first athletic director of the Downtown Athletic Club in New York, which sponsors the award. Heisman, who coached at seven schools in his career, including Auburn U. and Georgia Tech U., died in 1935. The award, then

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