

the Downtown Athletic Club Award, was renamed in his memory.

The Heisman winner now is determined by open balloting of 918 voters made up of print and broadcast journalists and the 48 living former Heisman winners.

"The award is given out every year to the best player in the country and that's all it's intended to be," says Jamie Crammins, athletic director at the Downtown Athletic Club, which will present the award Dec. 12 on national television. "How people hype or publicize it is their business. We're confident in the way it's handled."

But players like Syracuse U.'s Qadry "the Missile" Ismail, who watched his older brother Raghieb endure a year of hype in 1990 at Notre Dame, are recipients of that publicity, regardless of how the trophy race is handled by their athletic departments.

"With the Heisman Trophy comes a lot of stress and pressure," says Ismail, a senior wide receiver/kick returner, who now has Heisman hopes of his own. "But I feel if I can maintain my personality and in no way become pigheaded, cocky, conceited — all those negative connotations — because the moment I feel I'm the big man on campus, something negative is going to happen."

That's why U. of Notre Dame senior quarterback Rick Mirer avoids talking about the Heisman Trophy, though, like most contenders, he understands interviews are part of the process they must endure.

"It's not something I want to talk about," Mirer says. "It'd be nice to win it, but I'm not going to lose any sleep over it. I'm giving it as little time as I can."

Oklahoma State U. Sports Information Director Steve Buzzard says OSU 1989 Heisman Trophy winner Barry Sanders was the same way.

"He didn't enjoy doing that," Buzzard says. "He wanted to basically play, to practice and to be left alone. We tried to shield him away from that as much as possible."

But at the same time, colleges and universities that have Heisman Trophy candidates have a vested interest in seeing their players promoted.

"Winning the Heisman doesn't just benefit the individual player," Golden Bears Sports Information Director Kevin Reneau says. "[It benefits] the school in terms of national visibility, carryover for recruiting and alumni support."

And the players themselves decide how they'll handle the hype of being the most sought after college players in the country.

"I'm just taking it in stride," says U. of Florida senior quarterback Shane Matthews, who placed fifth in last year's balloting. "Anytime you play at a major university and being a quarterback, you're going to get a lot of attention."

And that's attention from which most Heisman contenders aren't running.

The last seven Heisman winners with the exception of Brigham Young U. quarterback Ty Detmer have been selected within the top 10 picks in the first round of the NFL draft.

Nevertheless the Heisman

"If some kid who's undersized, who'll never play in the pros wins it, that's what it's all about."

— Michael Cleary

Trophy is no guarantee of professional success. Only five Heisman winners are in the Professional Football Hall of Fame — Earl Campbell, Paul Hornung, O.J. Simpson, Roger Staubach and Doak Walker. By contrast, 37 Heisman winners are members of the College Football Hall of Fame.

"Once it gets to the point where they're saying who of this year's seniors will be the best pro, that's not part of the Heisman," says Michael Cleary, executive director of the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics. "If some kid who's undersized, who'll never play in the pros wins it, that's what it's all about."

In the end, Florida's Matthews says players just have to concentrate on playing good football.

player.

California has been sending out postcards with White holding a golden football. Syracuse sent out a pamphlet with Ismail bursting through the roof of the Carrier Dome. And Florida used its annual honors poster to tout Matthews, who appears larger and in full color compared to his teammates who surround him in black and white.

"There's some mailing about players showing you their stats, but no real bizarre stuff this year. That's good because I don't think that stuff worked anyway," says veteran Heisman voter Rick Bozich of the *Louisville (Ky.) Courier-Journal*. "I'm not opposed to a videotape if you want to explain what a guy has done. If it's something that actually explains something, that's OK, but if it's a

gimmick, it's at a point where that turns off as many people as it interests."

But ESPN college football analyst Beano Cook says the gimmicks are all part of winning the Heisman.

"I don't know any other way to do it," he says. "People have been criticizing the Heisman the last 15 or 20 years. It's always going to be the players at the skill positions just like the politicians who become pres-

ident usually come from the big states."

For offensive linemen and defensive players, it is much more difficult to draw enough attention to be considered for the award. Only two offensive linemen — Larry Kelley of Yale in 1935 and Leon Hart of Notre Dame in 1949 — ever have won the trophy. No defensive players ever have won the Heisman.

But those players that do win gain considerable exposure on national television. That means players like U. of Miami senior quarterback Gino Torretta who appear on national television reap benefits from lucrative TV contracts.

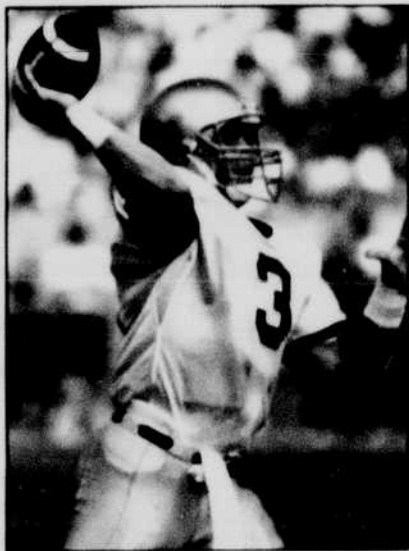
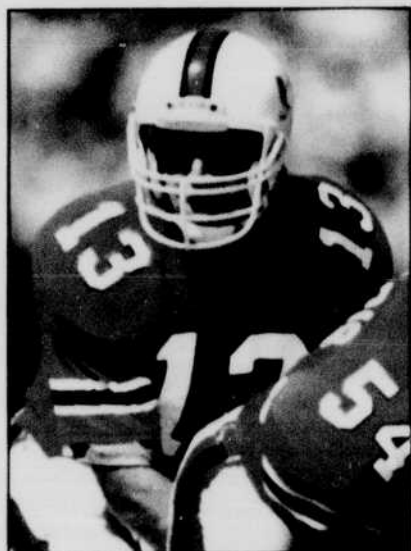
"Gino will have plenty of TV exposure," Venzon says. "He needs to play his best game every time he's out there."

And because Heisman hype starts in the preseason the players must endure greater scrutiny, on or off television, because the process is so long. Preseason magazines have Heisman lists in the spring and then weekly Heisman watches try to keep tabs on how candidates compare with other players through the early part of the season.

That makes it tough for players like Faulk, who are at their best just playing football.

"Everybody around campus is used to seeing me around and I'm the same old me," Faulk says.

"But if you're not strong you're going to get worn down mentally and physically. I still go out there and try to have fun and hope for the best to happen."



Hut, hut, hype: U. of Miami's Gino Torretta, Notre Dame's Rick Mirer and Florida State's Charlie Ward get major-program publicity.

"As long as I play well and the team plays well, things will take care of itself," he says.

But sometimes it doesn't hurt to give the process a little push along the way.

Most Heisman Trophy voters receive a bulk of mail from sports information departments touting various candidates. BYU sent out neckties with a list of "Five Reasons the Heisman Race Should End in a Tie" to tout former quarterback Detmer in 1990. The U. of Pittsburgh took advantage of a nationally-televised game on Halloween in 1987 and made masks of Heisman candidate Craig "Ironhead" Heyward. The athletic department later mailed out 1,000 masks to voters.

"Sometimes they work and sometimes they don't," says Venzon, who was involved in Heyward's promotion at Pitt before taking over sports information at Miami. "You're taking a gamble every time you do it."

Part of the gamble is having the gimmicks draw more attention than the player's performance on the field.

"You have to ask yourself, 'If I do something gimmick-oriented, do I have a chance in this day and age of media backlash that I'm going to hurt Shane Matthews,'" says John Humenik, Florida sports information director. "If there's even a possibility that the focus that was Shane Matthews becomes why is the University of Florida

"It takes time away from academic things I could be doing. But... to win the big one, you must do it."

— Russell White