

Heisman hype starting again

Who should win The Heisman Trophy this year? Should we care?

College football's most prestigious award is rapidly becoming meaningless. Not that the media have noticed — the hail of hype and hysteria caused by "The Heisman Race" remains as dense as ever.

The Heisman still makes a nice addition to anyone's trophy case or resume. The problem is that college football's best players are not winning the award given to college football's best player.

Look at the last four players to win the award: Gino Torretta, Desmond Howard, Ty Detmer and Andre Ware. When was the last time you saw any of these guys playing in an actual NFL game?

Combined, they've been on television about as long as *The Chevy Chase Show*. That includes shots of them holding clipboards on the sidelines.

This is not to say that players like Ware and Howard are vastly over-hyped no-talent, no-hope washouts with no futures. (Nobody can hope for two Tony Mandariches in one lifetime.) But it seems odd that the players touted as the best that college can offer have hardly taken professional football by storm.

Traditionally, Heisman voters have displayed better sense than this. It used to be a safe bet that the Heisman trophy winner was headed for stardom in the NFL. From the mid-1970s to mid-1980s, Heisman recipients included Tony Dorsett, Earl Campbell, Charles White, Marcus Allen, Hershel Walker, Bo Jackson and Vinnie Testaverde.

The evidence suggests that either football players or sports-writers are getting worse. On one hand, football players are stronger, faster and better



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coached than ever. On the other hand, it's hard to believe sports-writers can get any dumber.

Here are some reasons that the media fumble in voting for the Heisman:

- Cable television. More games are on television, but it's usually more of the same few teams. Miami, Notre Dame, Florida State, USC and Michigan continue to dominate the airwaves.

These teams are perennial powers and are proven draws on television. They don't always produce college football's best player. But when somebody like Torretta gives interviews on pregame shows, has Lee Corso fawning over him at halftime and even throws a touchdown pass or two in one of his team's televised games, he can become a Heisman candidate whether he deserves it or not.

- Picking on the little guy. On the other hand, rare television appearances make or break Heisman hopefuls at small schools. For example: Besides a bad game against UCLA, how's Marshall Faulk doing this season? Few care. Even fewer know.

Low numbers in a rare television appearance took Faulk out of the media spotlight and Heisman contention. Of course, if you'd like to become a sports agent, you might want to remember his name.

- Statistical overload. There are plenty of players putting up

great numbers every week. But the sheer number of college football teams makes it difficult to tell if a player has a great game or just delivered a pounding to a patsy. College football has so many gimmicky offenses that it can be hard to separate a talent from a player who is the product of successful system.

Barry Sanders and Andre Ware helped blow the statistical curve for Heisman hopefuls at low-profile schools. Sanders won the trophy by rushing for as many yards than his rivals, Rodney Peete and Troy Aikman, threw for. Ware put up equally mind-boggling stats in a pass-happy circus offense.

These kinds of performances tend to make 180-yard rushing games and 300-yard passing games seem trivial. Further clouding the issue is the increasingly prominent total offense statistic, which has allowed flashy receivers like Howard and Raghieb Ismail to enter the race by running up yards returning kickoffs and punts.

- Everybody loves a winner. When voters no longer rely on statistics, a team's success can decide a player's Heisman candidacy.

This can create a dilemma. When a quarterback like Torretta or this year's favorite, Charlie Ward, is supported by a great defense, quality offensive line and first-rate receivers, how can he look bad?

The star often gets the credit for his team's success, no matter how dominant the rest of his team is. As a result, the mythical national championship is helping create a mythical best player in the country. Instead of a player holding a football, maybe the Heisman trophy should depict a player holding a clipboard.

Duck men's golf team improves to seventh

By Steve Mims
Oregon Daily Emerald

The Oregon men's golf team is improving, but its team scores don't necessarily prove it.

The Ducks finished seventh in their next-to-last tournament of the fall, the Robertson Holmes Invitational, Tuesday in Stockton, Calif. Oregon finished the two-day, three-round tournament at 894, its second-best team total of the year to go along with its lowest final placing at a tournament all year.

"I think we are going in the right direction," Oregon head coach Steve Nosler said. "We are getting better, but we are still not playing at the level we need to be at."

One player who is playing at a high level is junior Ted Snavelly, who finished ninth Tuesday with a 4-over-par 218. Snavelly opened the tournament with a 74 in the opening round Monday before shooting consecutive 72s in the final rounds.

"Ted is getting to the point where I have a lot of confidence in him," Nosler said. "He has shown a lot of consistency in the last few tournaments."

Junior Paul Regali has played better lately as well, finishing among the top two Oregon golfers in each of the past two tournaments. After shooting an even-par 216 at the Nike Invitational last weekend, Regali finished 31st

with a 224 this week. Regali shot a 2-over-par 73 in the second round before finishing with a 76 that Nosler said showed his mental toughness.

"Paul is showing consistency right now," Nosler said. "He shot 76 in the third round, but that round started with a double bogey on the first hole and a bogey on the second hole. He really held it together well the rest of the way."

Oregon senior Randy McCracken gave the Ducks a boost in the final round with an even-par 71. McCracken opened the tournament with rounds of 76-78 Monday and finished in 37th place at 225.

Junior Andy Scheidt and sophomore Chris Bensel tied at 236, though they took separate paths to that total. Scheidt opened with a 72, but finished with back-to-back 82s, and Bensel shot 81 in the first round, followed by rounds of 76 and 77.

"We are going to be a better team," Nosler said. "Whether or not we get multiple wins like we did last year, I'm not sure. We need some of these kids to play better if we are going to be good."

The Ducks will play their final tournament of the fall, the Bruin Classic in Temecula, Calif., Nov. 1-2. Following that tournament, Oregon does not play again until it hosts the Duck Invitational March 7-8 at Eugene Country Club and Emerald Valley Resort.

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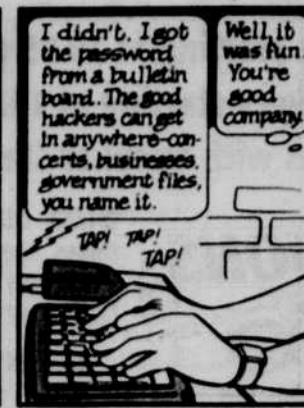
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