

White says Peterson deserves more Heisman consideration

After Peterson's 225-yard performance against Texas, his teammate speaks on his behalf for major award

BY JEFF LATZKE
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NORMAN, Okla. — There wasn't even a split-second of hesitation by Jason White.

Asked if he or Oklahoma teammate Adrian Peterson should be getting more attention from Heisman Trophy voters, White blurted out his answer: "Adrian."

The sixth-year senior has made it clear he has no need for a second Heisman Trophy. He's been through all that once before after throwing for 3,846 yards and 40 touchdowns last season. What he doesn't have is a national championship.

Ironically, Peterson could be White's best asset in his quest for a national title and his biggest obstacle to winning a second Heisman.

The freshman running back has been dominant since arriving in Norman. He's off to the best start of any Oklahoma rusher in history and proved to be a difference-maker in the Sooners' latest win over arch rival Texas.

So, any Heisman attention Peterson gets, White's all for it. Heck, he

even knows the kid's stats.

"He's well-deserving of it," White said. "His first five games over 100 yards each game. Coming off a 225-yard game. He should be up there."

Peterson's numbers are indeed impressive. He's the nation's fourth-leading rusher with 154 yards per game, and that's while splitting time with starter Kejuan Jones. He had his biggest game of the season in the Sooners' biggest game, easily outshining another Heisman hopeful in Texas tailback Cedric Benson.

The 19-year-old Peterson is changing the Oklahoma offense. A pass-heavy team a year ago led by White and receiver Mark Clayton, the Sooners are relying more on the run and Peterson is making it work.

He's averaging 6.5 yards per carry and is 56 yards ahead of Maurice Clarett's pace through the first five games of his freshman year at Ohio State in 2002. Clarett led the Buckeyes to a national title.

But at the same time, every yard he gains is one White can't put on his Heisman resume, and it's already

noticeable on the stat sheet. Through five games, White has 44 fewer pass attempts and is 500 yards and seven touchdowns behind last season's pace.

With 972 yards and nine touchdowns, he still measures up with Cal's Aaron Rodgers (881 yards, seven TDs) and Southern California's Matt Leinart (1,187 yards, 10 TDs), but White is way behind Purdue's Kyle Orton (1,642 yards, 18 TDs).

White, of course, couldn't care less. Just give him the chance to win a national championship and he'll be happy. For all he accomplished last season, White describes the national title as "one thing we fell short on."

White has a constant reminder on the Sooners' coaching staff of the way he wished things would have worked out. Former Oklahoma quarterback Josh Heupel is now a graduate assistant. Put in a similar situation, Heupel's story went the opposite way of White's.

Heupel took his team to the national championship game in 2000 and was a Heisman finalist. He won the game, but not the Heisman. White lost the game and won the trophy.

"I definitely want what he's got," White said, "and I'm going to give my best this year to get it."

Arizona: Freshman recruit shot Sunday

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and is second on the team in tackles with 33, behind Lamont Means' 35. Jones leads the league with three fumble recoveries.

Several of the Wildcats' defensive linemen have also been absent from the rotation. Tackles Paul Philipp and Johnathan Turner have been plagued by injuries. Yaniv Barnett was suspended indefinitely.

Arizona's defense was only able to get to UCLA quarterback Drew Olson twice last week. Olson completed 17 of 25 passes, which racked up 283 yards and four touchdowns. On average, the Wildcats only allow 195.6 yards per game.

Unpleasant past

Some gloomy chapters have been written recently in Arizona football's history book. Last season, the Wildcats played both national champions, Louisiana State and USC, as well as seven other programs who were worthy of a bowl game.

Oregon leads this all-time series 17-12. The Ducks have won five straight games and nine of the last 10 contests. Arizona's last defeat of Oregon came at home in 1998 when it held the Ducks to a field goal in the 38-3 victory.

The Wildcats are 3-7 at Autzen Stadium and the last visit was in 2000. Their last win came in 1986. Four of the last five games between these teams at Autzen Stadium have been decided by seven points or less.

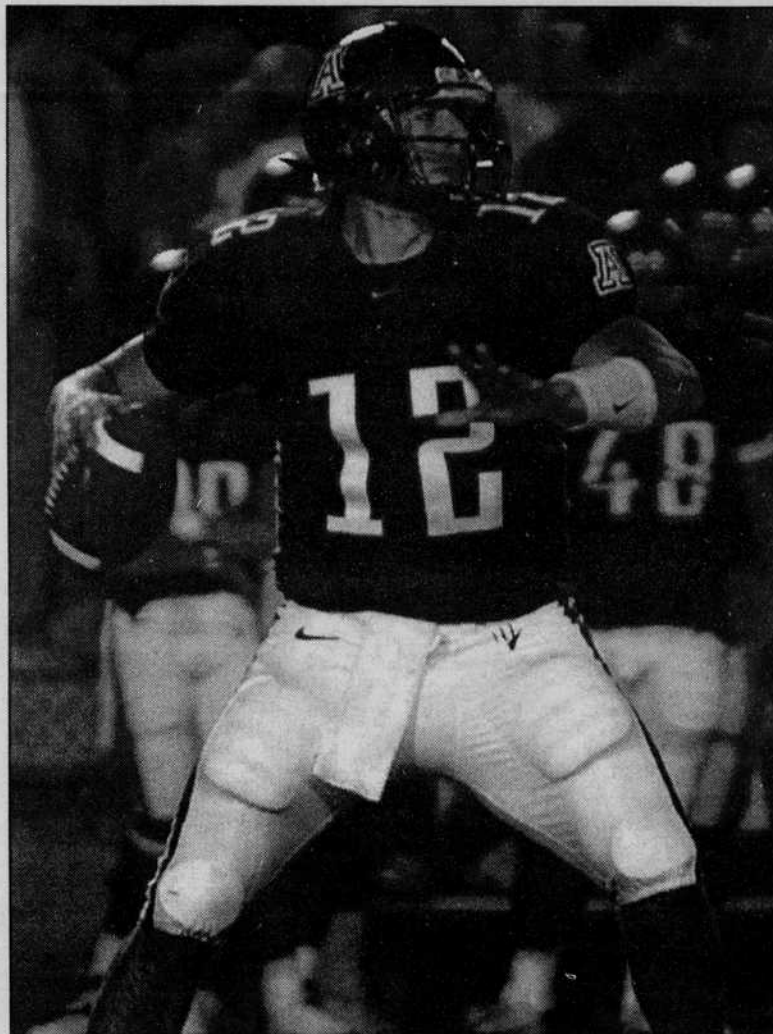
In 2001, the Wildcats were 0-5 before their first league win. They did not get their first conference victory in 2002 until the seventh league contest and the sixth last year.

Moving up the list

Running back Mike Bell rushed for a season-high 134 yards on 21 carries against UCLA. He is now No. 14 on Arizona's all-time career rushing list with 1,664 yards. Bell has averaged 4.6 yards per carry during his stint with the Wildcats. This season, Bell has two rushing touchdowns.

More losses

The Wildcats have one more empty spot on their roster after an athlete was shot at a party in Tucson, Ariz.,



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Arizona quarterback Kris Heavner was held to only 93 yards passing against UCLA last week. The sophomore has thrown for 748 yards and four touchdowns this season.

last Sunday according to the Associated Press.

Freshman Sheldon Watts, an offensive lineman recruit, received two gunshot wounds to the chest. An argument broke out at the party and Watts was allegedly a random target in the line of fire. He was in critical condition after the shooting but is improving this week, according to The Associated Press.

McCollins Umeh, another freshman recruit, died earlier this year during a voluntary training camp session. He collapsed, possibly because of heat exhaustion, and died of an enlarged

heart. Umeh was 18 years old.

New hardware

Arizona has adapted a color other than the standard white for its helmets. This season, the squad is sporting a blue coated helmet and face mask with the same logo on the side.

The Arizona program has never worn a helmet in one solid color. Old photographs show that classic helmets may have been painted red on top with blue on the flanks. All other helmets in the past have only come in shades of red and white.

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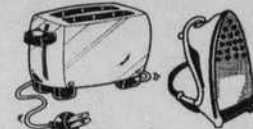
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