

Notre Dame Linebacker, Quarterbacks Manziel, Klein Have Pros, Cons As Heisman Finalists

BY BRIAN HAMILTON
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When he officially moved one step and one city closer to making history, Manti Te'o was wearing a tuxedo in Charlotte, N.C., preoccupied with signing autographs at a function for the Nagurski Award.

He didn't know his cross-country-and-back, award-week itinerary included a stop for the Heisman Trophy ceremony until social media broke the news Monday. It's a stiff-arm trophy, but Notre Dame's senior linebacker perceived it as an embrace of something bigger.

"I hope I win for my school — that's my main thing," Te'o said. "It's real cool to hear it. Everybody is texting me right now. I'm really excited to hear it."

On Saturday, Te'o can become the first pure defender to win the award, with Texas A&M quarterback Johnny Manziel and Kansas State quarterback Collin Klein joining him as finalists. What chances does each player have? Here's a look:

Johnny Manziel, QB, Texas A&M

The numbers: 3,419 passing



SHANE KEYSER/KANSAS CITY STAR/MCT
Kansas State quarterback Collin Klein (7) looks to throw in the first quarter against Texas on Saturday at Bill Snyder Family Stadium in Manhattan, Kan.

yards, 1,181 rushing yards, 43 total TDs, 7.88 yards per play.

Why he'll win: Johnny Football is a phenomenon, with no shortage of highlight-reel plays showcasing absurd athleticism and creativity that are catnip for Heisman voters. His 4,600 yards of total offense set an SEC record, and he led a stunning road upset of Alabama for the Crimson Tide's lone loss. And the Aggies called off the media black-out on Manziel just in time for a flood of stories, features and radio appearances in the stretch run.

Why he won't: The difference between a true freshman and a redshirt freshman such as Manziel is substantial, but he still would be classified as the first first-year player to take home the trophy. Voters might have been wary of that, as well as a three-interception day against LSU in one of the Aggies' high-profile losses. Manziel's numbers in a loss to Florida (173 passing yards, 60 rushing yards, one TD) weren't spectacular, but it was his college debut Sept. 8.

Manti Te'o, LB, Notre Dame

The numbers: 103 tackles, 5.5



DAVID T. FOSTER III/CHARLOTTE OBSERVER/MCT
Notre Dame linebacker Manti Te'o poses with the Bronko Nagurski Award on Monday in Charlotte, N.C.

TFL, 7 INTs, 11 pass breakups.

Why he'll win: Because he plays for Notre Dame, which is 12-0 and the No. 1 team in the nation and, most importantly, is Notre Dame. Te'o has benefited from the attention afforded the program's high-profile return to prominence, leading the No. 1 scoring defense while battling through the deaths of his grandmother and girlfriend early in the year. If the voters weighed the character part of the award, as the Irish's unquestioned inspiration, Te'o got a boost.

Why he won't: He plays defense, and that's it. No pure defender has won the award. And Te'o might not even be the best defensive player in the country, let alone the most outstanding player overall, depending on how one views Georgia's Jarvis Jones and South Carolina's Jadeveon Clowney. While Te'o posted big numbers early on, he didn't record a double-digit tackle game in November, even as the Irish pressed on to a BCS title game bid.

Collin Klein, QB, Kansas State

The numbers: 2,490 passing yards, 890 rushing yards, 37 total TDs, 7.25 yards per play.

Why he'll win: In an offense less specifically geared toward running extraordinary numbers of plays — and therefore amassing extraordinary amounts of yardage — Klein's numbers weren't much off the pace of Manziel's. And his team was more successful when very little was expected of it, winning the Big 12 title and earning a BCS spot against Oregon in the Fiesta Bowl. Like Te'o, the devout Klein got a boost if voters examined his character and comportment.

Why he won't: His numbers, while eye-catching, aren't the most prolific in the country. (Klein is No. 30 in total offense.) And a three-interception night in Kansas State's Nov. 17 meltdown at Baylor appeared to sidetrack Klein's momentum completely. He was the longtime front-runner, but his candidacy seemed to take a shot when the Wildcats' national title hopes fell apart. It may be that, without a catchy nickname or tradition behind him, Klein somewhat unfairly slipped out of voters' minds.

Bowls

From Page 19

son a few more relatives if the Trojans lost again.

Georgia Tech, meanwhile, was blown out at home by Middle Tennessee, lost its final regular-season game by 32 points and wound up with a losing record after getting into the Atlantic Coast Conference championship game by default, the next team in line after Miami decided to spend another postseason in self-imposed lockdown.

Even after losing the ACC game, the Yellow Jackets still got the call that extended their bowl streak to 16 years in a row.

Talk about an achievement worthy of an asterisk.

But, this isn't about one particular school. There's plenty of averageness to go around.

A dozen teams received bowl bids with records of 6-6, which is often the sort of mark that gets a coach fired, not earns his team a trip at the holidays. (Or, in the case of Purdue, was bowl-worthy AND got the coach fired).

In fact, there are two games matching a pair of 6-6 teams — Rice vs Air Force in the Armed Services Bowl at Fort Worth (sorry, our men and women in uniform) and Pittsburgh vs. Ole Miss in the BBVA Compass Bowl at Birmingham.

When those kind of teams get together, they're hoping you throw out the record book.

Instead, you should change the channel.

Yet, none of the 35 bowls could find a spot for Louisiana Tech, the highest-scoring team in the country, a squad that won nine times and barely lost to Johnny Manziel and Texas A&M in one of the most entertaining games of the season.

The Bulldogs apparently weren't too thrilled about the idea of going to the nearby Independence Bowl to dance with another team from their own state (Louisiana-Monroe). They thought they had might get a call

from someone more handsome. The Independence was all, like, why you disrespectin' us, girlfriend? So they called up Ohio (University, not State), which said "yes."

"Under no circumstances did I ever think there was any possibility at all that we would not play in a bowl game," Louisiana Tech coach Sonny Dykes said. "It is a shame that our nationally recognized team and its 31 seniors have to end the season this way."

No, the real shame is that college football ends its season this way.

We're promised a playoff in 2014, but we should see through that four-team ruse. It's a way to silence everyone who wants a le-

gitimate playoff (16 teams, minimum) and keep alive the bowl system, nothing more than a non-profit scam lining the pockets of its operators with exorbitant salaries for the taxing job of putting on one game a year.

Maybe if the fans stop watching, there will be a true playoff.

Maybe if the fans stop buying tickets, all these meaningless games will wither up and die.

There's no better time to start than now.

Happy Bowl Season!
Now, go do something else.

Paul Newberry is a national writer for The Associated Press. Write to him at pnewberry@ap.org or www.twitter.com

Viborg-Hurley

Boys' Basketball

Date	Opponent/Event	Location
12/7	Freeman	Freeman
12/10	Scotland	Hurley
12/14	Irene-Wakonda	Wakonda
12/20	Tripp-Delmont/Armour	Viborg
12/27	Buseman Classic	Centerville
12/29	Parkston Classic	Parkston
1/10	Gayville-Volin	Gayville
1/12	Schooler Classic	Sioux Falls
1/18	Baltic	Hurley
1/19	Hanson Classic	Mitchell (Corn Palace)
1/22	Alcester-Hudson	Alcester
1/24	Centerville	Viborg
1/29	Canistota	Viborg
2/1	Freeman Academy	Hurley
2/5	Avon	Viborg
2/8	Parker	Parker
2/9	DWU Classic	Mitchell (Corn Palace)
2/12	Menno	Hurley
2/14	Marion	Viborg
2/15	Flandreau Indian	Flandreau
2/25-26, 3/1	District 8B Tournament	Viborg-Hurley
3/5	Region 4B Final	TBA
3/14-16	State Tournament	Aberdeen

Girls' Basketball

Date	Opponent/Event	Location
12/4	Scotland	Scotland
12/8	Canistota	Canistota
12/11	Bridgewater-Emery	Emery
12/14	Irene-Wakonda	Wakonda
12/18	Corsica/Stickney	Corsica
12/20	Tripp-Delmont/Armour	Viborg
12/28	Parkston Classic	Parkston
1/5	Elk Point-Jefferson	Hurley
1/7	Alcester-Hudson	Alcester
1/10	Gayville-Volin	Gayville
1/14	Freeman	Freeman
1/18	Baltic	Hurley
1/24	Centerville	Viborg
1/26	TVC Classic	Alcester
2/1	Freeman Academy	Hurley
2/5	Avon	Viborg
2/8	Parker	Parker
2/12	Menno	Hurley
2/14	Marion	Viborg
2/15	Flandreau Indian	Flandreau
2/18-19, 22	District 8B Tournament	Gayville
2/28	Region 4B Final	Tea
3/7-9	State Tournament	Huron

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