

Eye On Sports

Three Nittany Lions finalists at College Football Awards Show

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A trio of Penn State standouts -- Paul Posluszny, Dan Connor and Jeremy Kapinos -- are finalists for three of the awards that will be presented Thursday (Dec. 7) at the Home Depot College Football Awards Show in Orlando, Fla.

The program will air from 7-9 p.m. on ESPN.

Members of arguably the nation's top linebacker unit, Posluszny (Aliquippa) and Connor (Wallingford) are finalists the Chuck Bednarik Award, presented to the nation's top defensive player. Posluszny won the 2005 honor. Michigan defensive end LaMarr Woodley is the third finalist of the prestigious honor, which is presented by The Maxwell Football Club. The award was first presented in 1995 in honor of former Philadelphia Eagles standout Chuck Bednarik.

A 2005 consensus All-American and two-time first team ESPN The Magazine Academic All-American, Posluszny has an opportunity to join Northwestern's Pat Fitzgerald as a two-time winner of the Bednarik Award. Fitzgerald was coached by Ron Vanderlinden, who is Penn State's linebackers coach and works with Posluszny, a senior, and Connor, a junior.

Penn State is the first school to have a pair of Bednarik Award finalists in the 12 years the honor has been presented. Former Nittany Lion All-America linebacker LaVar Arrington won the Bednarik Award in 1999.

Posluszny also won the 2005 Butkus Award, and is a finalist again for the top linebacker honor, which will be announced on the awards program for the first time.

The 2006 Academic All-American of the Year has an opportunity to join Oklahoma's Brian Bosworth (1985-86) as the only two-time recipient of the Butkus Award.

James Laurinaitis (Ohio State) and Patrick Willis (Mississippi) are the other Butkus Award finalists. Arrington also won the Butkus Award in 1999.

Posluszny also is a finalist for the Rotary Lombardi Award, being pre-



Image by Google

Posluszny is a finalist for the Bednarik Award, which he won last year, and the Rotary Lombardi Award.

sented tonight to the nation's top lineman or linebacker and the Lott Trophy, which will be awarded Sunday to the nation's IMPACT defensive player of the year.

Posluszny (108 tackles) and Connor (103) lead one of the nation's top defenses in tackles and rank No. 3 and 4, respectively, in the Big Ten Conference. The Nittany Lion defense is ranked in the Top 20 nationally in rushing (87.8 ypg, 10th), pass efficiency (104.4 rating, 11th), total (279.0 ypg, 16th) and scoring defense (14.8 ppg, 11th) and sacks (38, T 8th).

The two standout linebackers give Penn State two players with 100-plus tackles in a season for just the second time since 1969, when tackle records were first kept, joining linebackers Andre Collins (130) and Brian Chizmar (110) in 1989.

- A starter in the last 36 games, Posluszny is the school's career tackle

leader (364) and the first Nittany Lion to earn three 100-tackle seasons. The former Hopewell High School standout has 108 hits (65 solo), with 7.0 TFL, 3.0 sacks, two forced fumbles and four pass break-ups. He has led team in tackles eight times this season, including the last three games, and has an opportunity to become the first Penn Stater to lead the team in tackles three consecutive years.

Connor is in his second season as a starter and is second on the squad and fourth in the Big Ten with 103 tackles. He is tied for second on team with 8.5 TFL, third with 5.0 sacks (minus-39), three forced

fumbles (sixth in Big Ten), two interceptions and one big safety on a sack vs. Illinois.

The 2003 Parade Linebacker of the Year and Jim Henry Award winner at Strath Haven High School, Connor is one of only three Big Ten players to earn conference Defensive Player of the Week honors twice this season. Connor is eighth on the Penn State career tackle list with 264.

Kapinos (Springfield, Va.) is Penn State's first finalist for the Ray Guy Award, presented to the nation's top punter. The honor is named for Ray Guy, an outstanding punter with Southern Miss and the NFL's Oakland Raiders, and is presented by the Greater Augusta (Ga.) Sports Council.

One of the top punters in Penn State history, Kapinos is joined as a finalist by Georgia Tech's Durant Brooks and Baylor's Daniel Sepulveda.

A four-year starter, the former All-Met

selection from West Springfield High School is Penn State's career leader in punts (247) and punting yardage (10,326). His 41.8 career average is tied for second at Penn State and he owns four of the top seven game averages in school history.

Kapinos has been an unsung hero for the nationally ranked Nittany Lion defense. For the season, he is averaging 42.2 yards on 57 punts, with 19 kicks inside the 20, 12 fair catches and only 10 touchbacks.

His season long punt of 68 yards came at Ohio State, on a day when he posted a 50.5-yard average on six punts and stuck the Buckeyes inside their own 20-yard-line on three occasions to earn conference honors.

Kapinos' 42.2 average is seventh highest in school season history. Penn State opponents have just 23 punt returns for a 4.6 average, with a long return of 17 yards.

Coach Joe Paterno's Nittany Lions (8-4) will face No. 17 Tennessee (9-3) in the Outback Bowl on New Year's Day in Tampa, Fla. The series is tied, 2-2, with Penn State winning the last two meetings, in the 1992 Fiesta Bowl and the 1994 Citrus Bowl. Kickoff is at 11 a.m. in Raymond James Stadium.

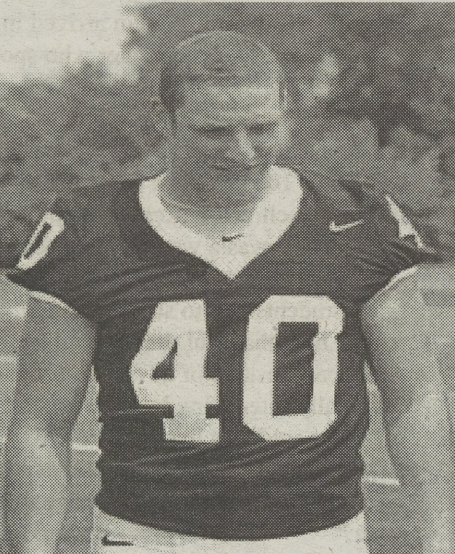


Photo By Associated Press

Connor is a finalist for the Bednarik Award along with Posluszny.

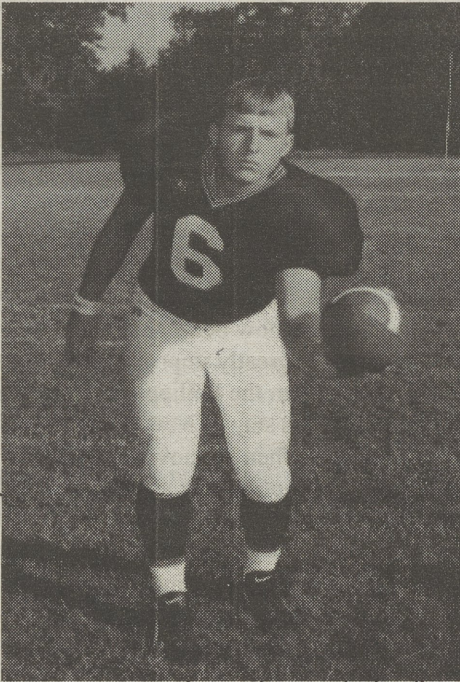


Image by psuplaybook.org

Kapinos is a finalist for the Ray Guy Award, a first for Penn State University.

OUTBACK BOWL
Tampa Bay, FL
Jan. 1, 2007- 11:00am
PENN ST. vs. TENN

Lady Lions Basketball Set the Bar High for Upcoming Season

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The 2006 Lady Lions began their season with back to back wins. The Delco Women handed out decisive defeats to the Community College of Philadelphia and Northampton Community College. The Lady Lions encountered a setback when they were unable to pull out a win against tough Division rival PSU Abington. A trip to Jenkintown to play Manor College also resulted in a loss for the team.

The Lady Lions face their toughest opponent of the young season on Saturday, Dec 9th when they square off

against D-III Arcadia University. The Knights should provide our team with a challenging game.

The Lady Lions have six returning players from last season: Dana Johnson (SR.); Cara Ziebelman (JR); Megan Russo (JR); Deana Gineitis (SO); Angelle Green (SO); Katie Martin (SO). The team has been bolstered by the addition of six freshmen: Tiesha Dunlap; Athena Nikolos; Samantha Matthews, Tiffany Ragins-Morris; Comfort Ibare-Jones. First Year Head Coach Larry Johnson and Assistant Coach Megan Kasmer both are leading the women toward another run at the PSUAC Championship.

The Molly Whoppers Score Again!

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It was a cold, windy day last Tuesday when the undefeated Molly Whoppers faced off against undefeated TNT in the 2006 Intramural Flag Football Championships. The road to the championships started in late October when 8 teams began their regular season play. Competition whittled the field down to four. The Molly Whoppers played The Returning Champs for the East Division Championships and TNT played the Ligers for primacy in the Western Division. The two champions advanced and their fate

was to be decided by 40 minutes of football. The game seesawed back and forth with each team scoring on successive possessions. A break came for the Molly Whoppers when TNT committed a costly turnover on a kick off. The Molly Whoppers converted and they were off to the races. TNT would make several more costly miscues but continued to fight back closing a four touchdown gap to only two with minutes to play. Time, and a great Molly Whopper team, put an end to TNT's dream of a championship and the coveted Intramural Shirts. The final score was 15-11. Congratulations to all the teams that participated in football this year.