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Consensus is: Dizon an All-American

By Tom Kensler
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Four years after arriving at Colorado as an unheralded fullback prospect, Jordon Dizon is going out as a consensus All-America linebacker.

A 6-foot, 220-pound senior, Dizon was named Tuesday to The Associated Press All-America first team. Dizon previously earned first-team status on The Sporting News and Walter Camp teams. That makes the native Hawaiian the first non-kicker to earn consensus All-America honors for CU since current Broncos tight end Daniel Graham in 2001.

Punter Mark Mariscal (2002) and place-kicker Mason Crosby (2005) also were named consensus All-Americans during this decade. Dizon became the first Colorado linebacker to earn consensus All-America status since Matt Russell in 1996.

A semifinalist for the Butkus Award, Dizon recorded 160 tackles during the regular season, including 120 unassisted. He becomes the 28th player in CU

history to become a consensus All-American in football, beginning with Byron "Whizzer" White in 1937.

Colorado Football

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"I've got to give a shout to my defensive line, who made things easy for me, and to my fellow linebackers and really all my teammates," Dizon said during the Butkus Award ceremony last week. "And (linebackers) Coach (Brian) Cabral has been such a tremendous influence in my life."

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CU's Dizon makes AP All-American team

By Associated Press

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NEW YORK -- Colorado linebacker Jordan Dizon, who led the nation in solo tackles with 107, was named to the AP All-American team on Tuesday.

And when it comes to being an All-American, Darren McFadden doesn't have to settle for second.

The Arkansas running back and two-time Heisman Trophy runner-up was one of four players voted to The Associated Press All-America team for the second consecutive season.

Michigan offensive tackle Jake Long, LSU defensive tackle Glenn Dorsey and Ohio State linebacker James Laurinaitis were the other two-time first-team AP All-Americans on the team released Tuesday.

Heisman Trophy winner Tim Tebow joins McFadden in the backfield along with Central Florida's Kevin Smith, who leads the nation with 2,448 yards and 30 touchdowns. Smith is the first All-American from UCF, which began playing major college football in 1996.

Missouri quarterback Chase Daniel, who finished fourth in the Heisman voting, was voted to the second team. Hawaii's Colt Brennan, third in the Heisman voting, was the third-team quarterback.

McFadden set school records with 1,725 yards rushing and 2,172 all-purpose yards, breaking the marks he set last year. He scored 16 touchdowns and threw four TD passes, working as a quarterback out of Arkansas' shotgun Wild Hog formation.

The junior has said he'll decide whether to return to school for his senior season after the Cotton Bowl on Jan. 1 against Daniel and Missouri, though he may have given a hint as to which way he was leaning after the Heisman ceremony when he said, "I think my quarterbacking days are about to come to a halt."

Kansas State receiver Jordy Nelson went from walk-on to All-American.

Nelson didn't get a scholarship after playing at Riley County High School, about 20 miles from Kansas State's Manhattan campus. He redshirted in 2003 and was a defensive back in 2004, again not seeing any game time.

He moved to receiver in 2005 and started all 11 games, catching 45 passes for 669 yards. In 2006, he battled injuries and caught 39 passes for 547 yards.

This season, Nelson became a star. He ranked second in the country in both receptions (122) and receiving yards (1,606) behind fellow All-American Michael Crabtree of Texas Tech.

"I couldn't envision this going into my senior year," Nelson said. "Week after week the numbers kept coming. I have to give a lot of credit to the coaches.

"It surprises me what's happened."

Crabtree set NCAA freshman records with 125 receptions for 1,861 yards and 21 touchdowns. Fellow redshirt freshmen Jeremy Maclin from Missouri (all-purpose player) and Arizona State kicker Thomas Weber also made the first team.

The last freshman to be an AP All-American was Oklahoma running back Adrian Peterson in 2004.

Crabtree was also one of four players unanimously selected to the first team by a panel of 12 media members, along with McFadden, Dorsey and Southern California defensive tackle Sedrick Ellis.

Tebow became the first sophomore to win the Heisman on Saturday night. He was the second-rated passer in the country, led the Gators in rushing and became the first major college player with at least 20 rushing touchdowns and at least 20 TD passes in the same season.

The last Florida quarterback to be an All-American was Rex Grossman in 2001.

Missouri's Martin Rucker, who led the nation's tight ends with 81 catches, gave the Tigers two All-Americans.

Long was joined on the offensive line by Kansas tackle Anthony Collins, guards Duke Robinson of Oklahoma and Martin O'Donnell of Illinois, and Wake Forest center Steve Justice.

On the defensive line with Dorsey and Ellis were ends Chris Long from Virginia and George Selvie of South Florida.

Penn State's Dan Connor, Dizon and Laurinaitis were the linebackers. They were also the three finalists for the Butkus Award, given to the nation's top linebacker. Laurinaitis won the award.

In the secondary, the cornerbacks were Aqib Talib from Kansas and Antoine Cason from Arizona. The safeties were Jamie Silva from Boston College and Craig Steltz from LSU, each with six interceptions.

Cincinnati's Kevin Huber was the punter. He led the nation with a 46.9-yard average.

The Big 12 had eight players selected to the first team, leading all conferences. The Big Ten and Southeastern Conference were second with four All-Americans each.

The AP All-America voting panel is: Alex Abrams, The Morning New of Northwest Arkansas; Jimmy Burch, Fort Worth Star-Telegram; Mike Dearmond, The Kansas City Star; Doug Doughty, The Roanoke Times; Eric Hansen, The South Bend Tribune; Kirk Herbstreit, WBNA-AM/ESPN; John Heuser, The Ann Arbor News; Aditi Kinkhabwala, The Bergen (N.J.) Record; Neal McCready, Mobile (Ala.) Press-Register; Dave Morrison, Beckley Register-Herald; Kevin Pearson, The Press-Enterprise; Mike Prater, Idaho Statesman.

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Bowl berth pays dividends for Buffs

CU figures to benefit both immediately and down the road

By Kyle Ringo

Tuesday, December 11, 2007

Earning a trip to a bowl game is no small accomplishment for a football team with 50 starts made by freshmen.

While it says a lot about young talent and the coaching done in that season, it might be even more significant for the future of the program.

Colorado coach Dan Hawkins and numerous veteran players — including linebacker Jordon Dizon, defensive tackle George Hypolite and wide receiver Patrick Williams — agreed earning a bowl trip generally makes players more hungry to get back to the postseason in future years.

They say it's much more effective in the motivational department than a team thinking about redemption following a 2-10 season, as was the case at this time a year ago in Boulder.

"They know what they're playing for all year," Dizon said.

Hypolite said any bowl experience is better than none.

During his freshman season in 2005, the Buffs finished the regular season on an ugly three-game slide that included a 70-3 loss to Texas in the Big 12 Championship game. It damaged the Buffs' reputation and cost the coaching staff their jobs. But the team still played in the ChampsSports Bowl in Orlando, where it lost to Clemson.

Hypolite said he would prefer to go through all that turmoil once again than spend another December at home on his couch.

"Not going to a bowl game is a heart-wrenching experience because you watch all these guys that maybe you played against and guys you know, friends, and they talk about their bowl, gifts and how much fun they had," Hypolite said. "They always look back on their season in a positive light. Even if they didn't have the greatest season, they still went to a bowl game and it's always positive.

"When you don't go to a bowl game, there is such a negative aura around the team for the next nine months off."

Colorado finished 6-6 this season and will face Alabama Dec. 30 in the 32nd annual Independence Bowl in Shreveport, La. The Buffs have already had six more practices than they otherwise would have had they lost the regular-season finale to Nebraska. They figure to practice 11 more times before facing the Crimson Tide.

All the extra work is invaluable in developing young players, whether they redshirted this season or earned playing time.

"They get a lot of extra work that a lot of teams don't get," Williams said. "Once the season is over they hang their pads up and they're in winter conditioning. ... It's good that the young players see it right now so they know what they're playing for and they know what it feels like to be there."

The Independence Bowl will be Hawkins' fifth bowl game as a head coach. He has a 2-2 record in previous trips, all made during his five-year tenure at Boise State.

Two of those bowl games with the Broncos were trips out of town and two of the games were played in Boise.

"I definitely think once they go, they want to get back there," Hawkins said. "It's a fun thing. It's a good event. They get to travel and you play somebody good. I definitely think the young guys are very excited about continuing to play."

Hypolite not only has been motivated by his previous bowl experience. The stories he hears from friends feed his desire to play in better bowl games. His best friend is Southern Cal safety Kevin Ellison, who will play in the Rose Bowl in January for the third time in his career. Hypolite said he would like to play in a Bowl Championship Series game just once.

If he decides to return to CU for his senior season next year instead of turning pro, he will have one final opportunity to make it happen.

"There is a lot more hope, and not as much blind hope," Hypolite said of the benefits of a bowl trip. "It's more proof. You're 6-6. You went to a bowl game. If we win our bowl game we're 7-6. There is a lot more hope, a lot more proof. There is a lot more to buy into as opposed to being 2-10 and not going to a bowl game and now suddenly we need to start from scratch."



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