



MISSOURI VALLEY

C O L L E G E

Date: October 17, 2006
RE: Draddy Award

MORRISTOWN, N.J. - Six NAIA players were among the 148 selected as the best and the brightest from the college gridiron. The National Football Foundation & College Hall of Fame (NFF) announced this year's semifinalists for the 2006 Draddy Trophy, presented by HealthSouth, and the candidates for the NFF 2006 National Scholar-Athlete Awards.

Missouri Valley College senior Tight End Ryan Ross of St. Petersburg, FL is among the NAIA football candidates.

One of college football's most sought after and a competitive award, the Draddy Trophy recognizes an individual as the absolute best in the country for his combined academic success, football performance, and exemplary community leadership.

"The Draddy epitomizes everything right about college football," said NFF President Steven J. Hatchell. "By recognizing this group, we highlight the countless hours and demands that each college football player must balance as they pursue their dreams of a higher education and their passion for football. The NFF has both the privilege and responsibility to pay tribute to this exceptional group of role models, who truly embody the term student-athlete."

Nominated by their schools, which are limited to one nominee each, semifinalists must be a senior or graduate student in their final year of eligibility, have a GPA of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale, have outstanding football ability as a first team player, and have demonstrated strong leadership and citizenship. Established to honor former NFF Chairman

Vincent dePaul Draddy, a Manhattan College quarterback who founded the Izod and Lacoste brands, the award comes with a stunning 24-inch, 25-pound bronze trophy, and a \$25,000 post-graduate scholarship.

With a 3.51 average GPA and majors such as biochemistry and zoology, the group includes 70 players who have earned all-conference recognition on the field and 94 captains. Nominees hail from all NCAA divisions and the NAIA.

The NFF Awards Committee, comprised of former coaches, Hall of Famers and college administrators, will select and announce up to 15 finalists on Oct. 26. The winner, also selected by the committee, will be announced at the 49th NFF Awards Dinner on December 5 at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York City. Each finalist will also be recognized that night as part of the 2006 National Scholar-Athlete Class, receiving an \$18,000 post-graduate scholarship.

Launched in 1959, the NFF scholar-athlete program became the first initiative in history to credit a player for both academic and athletic accomplishments. The Draddy, first awarded in 1990, adds to the program's mystique.

All NAIA Semifinalists-

Ryan Ross, [Missouri Valley College](#) - TE - Athletic Training/Exercise Science major...2005 All-Conference Honorable Mention...Scholar-Athlete...Team Captain.

Ryan Blackerby, [Georgetown College \(Ky.\)](#) - Two-time NAIA Scholar-Athlete...Enjoys sports and playing miniature golf...Favorite food is pizza...Favorite musical group is Nickelback.

Brad Cook, [St. Ambrose University \(Iowa\)](#) - OL - Four-year starter...2005 All-Conference selection...Finance/Economics major...

Robert Hummel, [Jamestown College \(N.D.\)](#) - WR

Blake Reinke, [Northwestern College \(Iowa\)](#) - TE/K - Exercise Science major

Raul Tucker, [Ottawa University \(Kan.\)](#) - DB

Marshall, MO - Ryan Ross is an Athletic Training major and is preparing himself to go to medical school after receiving his degree from Missouri Valley College. Dr. Karla Bruntzel, Interim Dean of Education and Athletic Training Program Director had this to say about Ryan, "Ryan is one of the

nicest young men I have ever worked with. He is organized, dedicated, and has been a good leader and good scholar in our program. Ryan has shown great character juggling a challenging major, in athletic training, and his demanding football schedule. I have been very impressed with his time management in the classroom, through his clinicals, and in his extra classes to prepare him for medical school. Ryan is not a person to ever make excuses in the classroom or on the field and he always finds a way to get the job done."

For additional information about Ryan Ross contact:

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