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**TOP 10 NATIONAL SPORTSMANSHIP AWARD FINALISTS
ANNOUNCED BY AWARDS AND RECOGNITION ASSOCIATION**

2008 List Includes Collegiate Football Standouts Who Do Good On and Off Field

Glenview, Ill., (Nov. 5, 2008) – The Awards and Recognition Association (ARA) today revealed the top 10 finalists for its annual sportsmanship award (www.arasportsmanshipaward.com), given to one outstanding NCAA Bowl Division collegiate football player who best personifies the spirit of sportsmanship.

The 2008 Sportsmanship Award recipient will be chosen from one of these 10 finalists and announced this December. Finalists represent a variety of schools of all sizes throughout the United States. Previous winners are former Washington State quarterback Alex Brink (2007), St. Louis Rams running back Brian Leonard (2006) and Carolina Panthers running back DeAngelo Williams (2005).

“The ARA Sportsmanship Award is the only national award that recognizes an athlete’s character and leadership as it translates to sportsmanship,” said Cathy Garcia, President of the ARA. “Our panel seeks stand out players who give 100 plus percent when on the football field and in life. We’re thrilled about the caliber of this year’s candidates. These young men are role models and consistently conduct themselves in an exemplary sportsmanlike manner.”

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TOP 10 NATIONAL SPORTSMANSHIP AWARD FINALISTS –Add One

To qualify for the award, an athlete must be a starting player or significant contributor on his team; be a senior in good academic standing; demonstrate great respect for competitors, school, teammates and coaches; show an ability to accept victory and defeat graciously; convey a high degree of humility and integrity; and demonstrate commitment in the classroom and to the community.

Former Brigham Young University Head Football Coach LaVell Edwards chairs the selection committee. The finalists were selected in a blind process.

The 2008 award recipient will be announced in December. The finalists, in alphabetical order, are:

Joe Craddock/Middle Tennessee State University. Chelsea, Alabama native, quarterback, team captain and ESPN Helmet Sticker recipient, Craddock also helps with the Murfreesboro City Schools Mentoring Program, Special Olympics, Reading Raiders and Boys and Girls Clubs.

Javier Estopinan/University of Florida. Son of Cuban immigrants, Estopinan is a Miami native and defensive lineman who was voted team captain and 2008 Leadership Committee member.

Casey Gerald/Yale University. Dallas native, defensive back and Rhodes Scholarship candidate, Gerald defied odds to become a Gates Millennium Scholar, was accepted into Harvard Business and also supports the low-income Dallas community where he came from.

Kole Heckendorf/North Dakota State University. Wide receiver and senior captain with a 3.8 grade point average, Heckendorf is a Mosinee, Wisconsin native and semifinalist for the Draddy Trophy that honors college football's best scholar-athletes.

Tim Hiller/Western Michigan University. Maintaining a 4.0 grade point average, starter quarterback and Orrville, Ohio native, Hiller completed his undergraduate degree in three years, is pursuing his MBA and serves as a tutor and leader of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

Jan Jorgensen, Brigham Young University. Defensive end for the BYU Cougars, Jorgensen, a Helper, Utah native was voted defensive captain by his peers and is gracious with the press, acknowledging performances on his and opponents' teams.

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TOP 10 NATIONAL SPORTSMANSHIP AWARD FINALISTS –Add Two

Ryan Kozey/Valparaiso University. Waterford, Wisconsin native, offensive tackle, team captain and civil engineering major on the Dean’s list, Kozey is a three-year starter who also does fundraising for diabetes, AIDS and cancer.

Eric Peterman/Northwestern University. Native of Riverton, Illinois, wide receiver and engineering student, Peterman was named a two-time recipient of the Academic All-Big Ten award and is also active as part of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

Austin Starr/Indiana University. As a Logansport, Indiana native and Hoosier kicker, Starr is a biology major with Academic All-American Honors from CoSIDA/ESPN The Magazine, while also participating in local American Cancer Society events and youth mentoring programs.

Drew Weatherford/Florida State University. Senior quarterback, finance major, two-time member of the All-ACC Academic football team and Tallahassee resident, Weatherford is known as the “go to” player for media interviews and he continues his role model status helping with charitable fundraisers and working with local schools.

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