



## FWAA writing contest winners

The results of the FWAA's 12th annual Best Writing Contest, which is sponsored by Insight, are listed below. All winners will be recognized at the FWAA's annual Awards Breakfast on Jan. 4 at the

FedEx Orange Bowl media hotel. All places received certificates and either merchandise from Insight or cash prizes. First-place winners also receive plaques.



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Bruce Feldman 10

#### COLUMNS

**First place:** Jon Solomon, *Anderson Independent-Mail*

**Second place:** Eric Hansen, *Irish Sports Report*

**Third place:** Stewart Mandel, *SI.com*

**Honorable mention:** Pete Kerasotis, *Florida Today*;  
Bud Withers, *Seattle Times*; John Canzano, *The Oregonian*

#### ENTERPRISE

**First place:** Jason King, *Kansas City Star*

**Second place:** Bruce Feldman, *ESPN The Magazine*

**Third place:** Ron Higgins, *Memphis Commercial Appeal*

**Honorable mention:** John Canzano, *The Oregonian*;  
Josh Robbins, *Orlando Sentinel*; Adam Thompson, *Denver Post*

#### FEATURES

**First place:** Kalani Simpson, *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*

**Second place:** John Canzano, *The Oregonian*

**Third place:** Tom Dienhart, *The Sporting News*

**Honorable mention:** John D. Lukacs, *Special for USA Today*;  
Dan Raley, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*

#### GAME — IMMEDIATE DEADLINE

**First place:** Adam Thompson, *Denver Post*

**Second place:** Gene Wojciechowski, *ESPN The Magazine*

**Third place:** Olin Buchanan, *Austin American-Statesman*

**Honorable mention:** Rob Biertempfel, *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*;  
Joseph Person, *The State*; Ted Miller, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*

#### GAME — LOOSE DEADLINE

**First place:** Bruce Feldman, *ESPN The Magazine*

**Second place:** Dennis Dodd, *CBS SportsLine.com*

**Third place:** Bud Withers and Bob Condotta, *Seattle Times*

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**Dick Weiss**  
*New York Daily News*
- First Vice President  
**Alan Schmadtke**  
*Orlando Sentinel*
- Second Vice President  
**Dennis Dodd**  
*CBS SportsLine*
- Executive Director  
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- 2004 Directors**  
**Mark Anderson**  
*Las Vegas Review & Journal*
- Jack Bogaczyk**  
*Charleston Daily Mail*
- Charles Durrenberger**  
*Arizona Daily Star*
- Rob Daniels**  
*Greensboro News & Record*
- Chad Hartley**  
*Reno Gazette Journal*
- Steve Henson**  
*Los Angeles Times*
- Todd Jones**  
*Columbus Dispatch*
- Rich Kaipust**  
*Omaha World-Herald*
- Steve Kiggins**  
*Casper Star-Tribune*
- Malcolm Moran**  
*USA Today*
- Joseph Person**  
*The State (S.C.)*
- Michael Pointer**  
*Indianapolis Star*
- George Schroeder**  
*Daily Oklahoman*
- Chip Scoggins**  
*Minneapolis Star-Tribune*
- Jeff Shain**  
*Miami Herald*
- Bob Thomas**  
*Florida Times-Union*
- Keith Whitmire**  
*Dallas Morning News*
- Ex-officio  
**Bob Burda**  
*Big 12/BCS liaison*  
**Jon Jackson**  
*Duke/CoSIDA*

# President's column



**DICK WEISS**

The conference commissioners involved in the Bowl Championship Series obviously felt they were creating a fail safe when they decided last spring to tweak the formula for selecting the participants in this season's national championship game again. They gave more power to the Associated Press

and the ESPN/Coaches Top 25 polls. The two human polls now make up two thirds of the total ranking. The other third will come from an average of four of six computer ratings.

With that in mind, and big money on the line — \$13 million to each team selected to play in the four marquee games — it's time for all parties who participate in the process to be accountable for their actions.

Quite frankly, having coaches vote in the process of putting together a national title game with teams in their own conferences in the pool is tantamount to parents voting in a beauty pageant in which their little girl is entered.

The coaches are put in a position where ethically they may be challenged to do the right thing at the expense of their own special interests. How many times have we seen special interests win out in that derby in other areas?

Then, to cloak the whole process in secrecy goes beyond the bounds of inviting mere skepticism by even the casual observer. We are tempting fate with this process that someday we have an out and out voting scandal among the coaches.

Already we have tales of sports information directors casting ballots and coaches voting teams up and down depending on their schedule of the week. It isn't far-fetched that some day we have coaches tinkering with their tallies to set up certain matchups at the end of the year. Given the new weight given to the

human polls, this could happen more easily.

But as a safeguard against these doomsday prophecies, make their votes PUBLIC!!!!

As president of the FWAA, I urge all our members to support an initiative from the Atlantic Coast Sports Media Association, which recently went on record suggesting, among other things, that the coaches make their ballots public, beginning in 2005.

The ACSMA has an ally in Oklahoma coach Bob Stoops, who recently suggested the coaches' votes should be made public.

Associated Press sports editor Terry Taylor, to her credit, has always adhered to a "public's right to know" policy with the 65 writers who vote in that wire service's weekly college football poll. The results of the six computer rankings also are out there to everyone to see.

But the coaches, whose poll appears in *USA Today* and is released each Sunday morning on ESPN, have never been held to the same standard. Frankly, although *USA Today* editors have in the past double checked with a coach when it looked as though he might have mistakenly left a team off his ballot or voted a team much lower than expected, inquiring minds want to know why the higher ups there and at ESPN haven't taken issue with the fact coaches have always been able to hide their opinions behind a veil of secrecy.

The ACSMA have officially challenged the coaches' position in a letter written by David Teel of the *Newport News (Va.) Daily Press* and Bob Thomas of the *Florida Times-Union* to Grant Teaff, the executive director and treasurer-secretary of the American Football Coaches Association. The letter was signed by their Board of Directors — Wes Durham of the Georgia Tech Sports Network, Bob Holliday of WRAL-TV in Raleigh, Rich Snider of the *Washington Times*, Jon Solomon of *The State* in Columbia, S.C., Thomas and Jeff White of the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* — and sent along by executive secretary Jon

*(Continued on page 8)*

# Columns: Jon Solomon

*Comment from the judge, Mickey Spagnola: Weaved his opinions with some social consciousness, while bringing out the emotional feelings of a somewhat backward mill city and how the people there realized they indeed had someone special in their midst.*

By JON SOLOMON

**Published in the Anderson (S.C.) Independent-Mail**

We like Radio because of who he is, yes. There he is every Friday night, funny and caring, leading cheers in the stands and tending to injured players on the sideline — the constant showman proving he can live a good life in spite of his diminished mind.

We love Radio because we recognize those traits.

Anderson, S.C., might be perceived as behind the times. The Confederate flag still flies on our Statehouse's grounds, traffic jams consist of sitting through two left-turn lights on Clemson Boulevard, and nonexistent street lamps make our city anything but electric.

But we get Radio. You can't deny us that. We've been able to get him for decades now, and we love that no one tunes in to hear Radio like us.

If that sounds a tad self-centered about a community, so be it. Anderson is growing bigger by the day; shopping centers, steakhouses and movie theaters have commercialized the community into Everywhere America. Radio still distinguishes us, we tell ourselves.

Our relationship with a mentally retarded black man, beginning when a white football coach discovered Radio loitering around T.L. Hanna High School practices, speaks to our values. It reminds us of words we learned from our mother: tolerance, humility, dedication, compassion. Communities can be built on those words alone. Had teachers, administrators, coaches and students at Hanna not accepted those principles to heart unconditionally, Anderson would be a poorer place.

Life is short, so, so short. Radio was dealt a bad hand. He is a high school junior for life with limited thinking abilities, a stubborn attitude and a gift for living. Harold Jones, a teacher first and a football coach second, was wise enough to see the latter and gave Radio a home when others would not.

It's worth noting that James "Radio" Kennedy has a brother who is also mentally challenged. George Kennedy, known as "Cool Rock" to his neighbors, goes about his business quietly, earning a few bucks by raking leaves and cutting grass.

We don't know George. We see George, but we don't get him. Maybe it's a commentary on the value our society places on sports that Radio is the movie star, not George. Or maybe sports are such a perfect vehicle to deliver positive messages because our games involve acceptance and teamwork.

**Jon Solomon — *The State* (Columbia, S.C.)**

**Age:** 28

**College:** University of Maryland, degree in journalism

**Background:** Interned at the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* and *Columbus Dispatch* in college.

Covered prep sports at the *Washington Post* off and on between 1997 and '99. First full-time job was covering the Clemson beat at the *Anderson Independent-Mail* from 1999 to 2003. Began covering Clemson for *The State* in December 2003.



Jake Porter, a member of a high school football team in Ohio, gained national recognition last year as a symbol of sportsmanship. Mr. Porter suffers from "Chromosomal-X," one of the leading causes of inherited mental retardation. An opposing team let him score a touchdown on the game's final play last October, creating an inspirational story about accepting others for who they are.

Radio's similar gift also is visible on Friday nights under the lights. He is in his element by spreading joy. Perhaps in his mind — although we will never know this for sure — he sees our smiles as his reason for being alive.

Maybe Radio was put here so we could see ourselves, really see ourselves, and help each of us answer the most important question there is: "What is my purpose in life?"

Andersonians, we're on the clock. In the world of Hollywood, where "based on a true story" means tugging at your emotions through any trick in the book, "Radio" the movie premieres this Friday across the nation.

*The Anderson Independent-Mail* thought enough about this national story to print the special section you are reading now. "Radio" the movie has become another commercialized business. That isn't right or wrong, just another fact of life.

Good stories sell. Radio is a great story.

The entire country will now receive the message we have been learning for so long. We have to share now. We had him first — go ahead and boast, it's OK — and we will have him again.

Just make sure we really understand what we have. It goes beyond Radio. It's a goodness that ties this Bible totin', football-lovin', steakhouse-eatin' community together, even if that feeling happens only once a week in the fall.

We heard Radio once. That should not stop us from flipping through the dials and hearing others.

# Enterprise: Jason King

*Comment from the judge, Gene Duffey: Excellent in-depth analysis of what happened to Kansas football, everything from hiring the wrong coach to police foolishly issuing parking tickets at games. The writer attempted to interview all parties involved, even if Mason wouldn't cooperate. Frederick talked about why he hired Allen and Allen admitted his mistakes. Good input from former players.*

**By JASON KING**  
*The Kansas City Star*

LAWRENCE — He was snoring. A University of Kansas player was snoring during a game. Yes, one he was playing in.

It was 1999 when Kansas, needing just two more victories to earn a bowl berth, traveled to Stillwater, Okla., to take on Oklahoma State. As the 39,562 fans at Lewis Field whooped and hollered, Jayhawks defensive back Carl Shazor slept on the team bench, a towel hanging over his face.

"To this day, I still can't believe he did that," former Kansas receiver Harrison Hill said. "I just remember standing on the sideline thinking 'What's happened to KU football?'"

For the last eight years, Jayhawk fans have been asking that same question.

In 1995, Kansas went 10-2, scored 51 points and beat UCLA by three touchdowns in the Aloha Bowl, and stood at No. 9 in the final AP poll.

That's right, in just eight years the Jayhawks have gone from one of the top 10 teams in the country to one of the two worst in the Big 12.

There hasn't been a winning year since that dream season in 1995. The team has lost 23 of its last 28 games. Attendance and morale — of players, students and boosters — have dipped right along with KU's place in the Big 12 standings. A coach and two athletic directors have been forced from their jobs.

How did it go so wrong, so fast?

The answers are multiple: There was the ugly departure of former coach Glen Mason, a bad hire of Terry Allen, bad recruiting, a lack of discipline and a general lack of commitment to the program by the university, and just some plain old bad timing as the school's fall came at the same time as the rise of cross-state rival Kansas State and the creation of the Big 12.

Even as second-year coach Mark Mangino and recently hired athletic director Lew Perkins try to move the program forward, here's a look at how the football team fell in such disarray.

## **Mason's departure**

Credit for the success of the 1995 team — as well as the 1992 team that became the first at the school to go

**JASON KING — *The Kansas City Star***

**Age:** 29

**College:** Baylor, graduated in December '97 (majored in Journalism)

**Background:** Entering fifth season as *The Star's* Kansas beat writer. Primary duties include coverage of the Jayhawks' improving football squad and the tradition-rich basketball program, which has appeared in two Final Fours during my time on the beat. Awards include APSE Top 10 finishes in Breaking News (2003) and Enterprise (2001) as well as first place for feature writing in the FWAA's 2002 contest.



to a bowl since 1981 — can go almost entirely to Mason.

Using a no-nonsense approach that was big on discipline, organization, unity and, most of all, toughness, Mason led the school through one of his strongest eras as they had four winning seasons, two bowl victories and even a triumph over Kansas State during a five-year stretch from 1991 to 1995.

Despite his success, former players, coaches and school officials cite the way Mason left the school as one of the reasons for the football program's swift demise.

Weeks before the Aloha Bowl victory over UCLA in 1995, Mason — after annually appearing on other school's wish lists — decided to take the head coaching job at Georgia. Kansas allowed Mason to stay with the team through the bowl game.

The night before the Aloha Bowl, Mason changed his mind and Kansas was more than willing to have him back. Perhaps it shouldn't have.

Top recruits who had orally committed to play for Mason and Kansas when it was seemingly one of the up-and-coming programs in the country, left for other schools once Mason said he was headed to Georgia and the school wasn't quick to replace him.

Players on the team were left wondering how committed Mason was to them when he returned.

"That next year (in 1996), we were kind of questioning whether coach wanted to be there," former Kansas tight end Tom Moore said. "A lot of the kids that had committed to KU changed their mind."

Mason did not return repeated phone calls for this story.

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# Enterprise (continued)

*(Continued from page 4)*

The Jayhawks finished 4-7 in 1996. Mason left after the season to take the head coaching job at Minnesota. And for the second straight off-season, few blue-chip prospects came to Lawrence.

## **Terry Allen's hiring**

The decision, it seems now, should have been so simple.

Current Texas A&M coach Dennis Franchione — the guru who has orchestrated turnarounds at New Mexico and TCU — was eager to return to his native Kansas and to take over the Jayhawks' program.

Instead, after interviewing Franchione, then-athletic director Bob Frederick opted to hire Terry Allen to replace Mason. Allen had amassed a 75-26 career coaching record. But he'd done it at Division I-AA Northern Iowa.

"Glen was hard on the players, and I thought it was important that we had somebody that was a little bit more caring," Frederick said.

And, it must be noted, someone who may not have been so quick to leave.

Frederick admitted it became troublesome to constantly have his football coach being mentioned for other jobs.

"The thing that was a problem for me and a lot of our supporters was that every December, he somehow got his name involved in job searches," Frederick said. "That was an important factor to me."

Frederick also said that Allen reminded him of a young Roy Williams, the kind of coach that would succeed once given his big break.

Eventually, though, former players and coaches said Allen's easygoing personality became one of his biggest downfalls.

## **Disappearance of discipline**

Under Mason, assistant coaches were fined if they weren't at work by 6:30 a.m.

Under Mason, players were prevented from going out on Thursday nights during the football season.

Under Mason, players were forced to live at Jayhawk Towers throughout their career to build unity. Things were different under Allen.

Keith Loneker, one of Mason's top recruits who played three years in the NFL, was stunned to see the state of the program when he returned to Lawrence after his pro career.

"When Terry was here, I can remember pulling into a bar at 2 a.m. on Friday morning (of game week) and seeing three of his offensive linemen walking out smoking cigarettes," Loneker said.

Moore, who spent one season as an assistant under

Allen after his playing days were over, was equally dismayed.

"Things were relatively unorganized," he said. "(Allen) tried to play the nice-guy role. The problem was that he didn't have anyone behind him that was a tough guy. With Mason, if you didn't respect what he said, you weren't around. But part of that was because, if he kicked someone off the team, there was another player there to replace him. Terry didn't have that."

Former players and coaches cite one example that seemed to sum up the Allen era.

Former quarterback Mario Kinsey, who already had been suspended for a game in connection with the theft of another student's purse, was suspended again when he failed to go to practice.

This time, however, the suspension lasted just one quarter. Allen, now an associate head coach at Iowa State, won't run from the criticism of his tenure.

"You can't change the past," he said. "You learn from your mistakes. At the time you think you're doing the right thing and you never look back.

"If I ever get the chance to become a head coach again, I'll remember the lessons I learned there."

## **Bad recruiting**

As a defensive back with the New York Jets last year, Andrew Davison said he got used to being hazed - and not because he was a rookie.

"Everyone always made fun of me because I played for Kansas," Davison said by phone from Dallas, where he's undergoing physicals in hopes of signing with the Cowboys. "They kept talking about how our team never has any good players."

Not that that was far from the truth during Allen's tenure. Only two players that Allen recruited during his five years in Lawrence became NFL draft picks. Mason, meanwhile, had 15 players drafted from his nine recruiting classes.

Some say a lack of effort was the reason Allen's staff missed out on many of the country's top prospects. During his one season on Allen's staff, Moore was charged with breaking down recruiting film.

Often times he identified high school standouts that appeared to be of Division I caliber.

"I'd put together highlight films of kids I thought we should recruit and, before long, they just kind of fell off our board," said Moore. "To be very honest, it seemed like they settled for the second-tier players. Sometimes, if they heard a kid was looking at Nebraska or Miami, they stopped recruiting him."

Davison said he became so frustrated with losing — Allen was 20-33 in four-plus seasons — that he ap-

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# Enterprise (continued)

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proached a KU assistant about their recruiting tactics.

"When I asked him why we weren't going after (high school) All-Americans, he said they didn't think they'd be able to get them," Davison said. "I was like, 'It doesn't hurt to try.' Quincy Morgan told me himself that he wanted to come to Kansas. And I know for a fact that Darren Sproles did, too.

"Instead we were going after a bunch of Division II players."

Sproles, who won a high school state championship at Olathe North, is now considered a Heisman Trophy candidate at Kansas State.

Once again, Allen doesn't dispute his critics.

"I can't use the 'It's tough to recruit at Kansas' excuse, because it's not," Allen said. "We just didn't hit on enough good ones. You can't change the past. At the time I thought I was doing the right thing."

## Creation of Big 12 and rise of Kansas State

In the last two months, two high school standouts from the Sunflower State — linemen Todd Haselhorst (Olathe East) and Scott Haverkamp (Silver Lake) — have made oral commitments to sign with Kansas.

And get this: Both were offered scholarships by Kansas State.

"All the people that say we can't do what Kansas State has done and that KU is just a basketball school ... they make me sick," said Hill, who played his final game for Kansas in 2001. "If football players will go to Manhattan, Kansas, when there's nothing there, then there's no reason why they wouldn't come to Lawrence.

"All it takes is a football coach who wants to work hard and recruit good players, and people will come to KU instead of Manhattan."

Perhaps it's not that easy.

The rise of Kansas State, which gives them a big edge on the limited number of Division I prospects that state produces, is only part of the problem for Kansas.

The creation of the Big 12 in 1996 is another.

The turmoil that surrounded Mason's departure couldn't have come at a worse time for Kansas — as the addition of four Texas schools only meant more seemingly guaranteed losses.

In fact, Kansas is 2-12 against Texas, Texas A&M, Texas Tech and Baylor since they joined the conference. Kansas is 12-44 in all Big 12 games.

"When we were the Big Eight, you only had seven conference games, so you had four non-conference games," said Frederick, the school's A.D. during 1987-2001. "You could qualify for a bowl by beating just two teams in the conference."

Kansas State does all that and more. It is 43-13 in

the Big 12 since it was created, including 10-4 against the Texas schools, and has been to a bowl game in all seven seasons.

## Lack of administration support

As he made his way to Memorial Stadium for the Northwestern game last weekend, Loneker saw something that was disturbing — yet hardly surprising.

"We're driving down the street and we're seeing cops giving people tickets because they're parked too close to the curb on game day," Loneker said. "You won't see that in Manhattan. They just don't get it. They're worried about the wrong things here."

Frustration with athletic administrators and other school officials — from the chancellor to the campus police — dates all the way back to the Mason era.

Those close to Mason during his time at Kansas said he often voiced his displeasure over Kansas' subpar facilities and the low salaries that were allotted to his assistants.

"Glen was always upset," said one of Mason's former assistants, who asked not to be identified. "The department had no plan, no vision. Everything was reactive instead of proactive. In the end I just think he threw his hands up."

Only in recent years has KU shown signs that it is ready to make more of a financial commitment to football.

In 2001, Frederick signed off on six-figure salaries for Hayes and Rip Scherer, the defensive and offensive coordinators during Allen's final season. Frederick also helped spearhead the fundraising for the Anderson Strength and Conditioning Center, an \$8 million, 42,000-square foot structure that's now considered one of the top weight facilities in all of college athletics.

Although he alienated people with a personality that many labeled "phony" during his 20-month stay in Lawrence, Al Bohl — who followed Frederick — helped the football program.

The five-year contract he awarded current coach Mark Mangino two years ago was for about \$600,000 per year, roughly twice what Allen made. Bohl also allotted \$1 million for Mangino to use on his assistants.

Salaries weren't the only problem.

In his first year on the job, Mangino was stunned to find the poor conditions of the practice fields, locker room and football offices. The low point came when he entered a room on campus with a potential recruit only to find water dripping from a ceiling into a bucket.

Most of those problems have been addressed.

"We've come a long way in so many areas," Mangino said. He grins.

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# Features: Kalani Simpson

*Comment of the judge, Shawna Seed: Writing so evocative you can almost feel the humidity, smell the sweat and hear the alma mater as the bus rumbles through the night.*

**By KALANI SIMPSON**  
*Honolulu Star-Bulletin*

The final minutes before kickoff, the final huddles before running out into the night:

"Remember how it felt to win last year?" says a Kalani High School football player, exhorting his teammates as they gather around, shuffling, the way football teams do before games, like bulls ready to take to the Pamplona street.

"It felt good," one of them answers. "Real good!"

But that was Sept. 22, 2000.

On this night, Friday night, the Falcons would lose to Kalaheo 65-7, to make it 24 in a row.

The ride home was a deathly silent one, as the bus seethed through the East Honolulu night, the air inside thick with sweat and hurt. It was an angry bus, an injured one. This was a team that felt losing in its stomach and in its heart, did not accept it, was not used to it. Would not tolerate it. No, not even after 24 straight.

It isn't easy playing football for Kalani. It seems that it's always been this way. The coach, Greg Taguchi, played here and thinks the Falcons may have won one varsity game in his four years. Friday night, he suited up 28 varsity players out of an enrollment that hovers around 1,000. All of them played; all of them needed to.

If you were making a movie about a team that went 0-24, the cast would look a lot like this: These guys are undersized (most of them) and unpolished (all of them), with a few characters mixed in, just for fun. You know the guys who say they never played football because they were "too small"? Here, the 130-pounders play. You know the one scrappy underdog on every team who is short on size and/or talent and/or athleticism but is all effort, all heart? Coaches always say, "If only I had a whole team of those guys ..."

Taguchi does have a whole team of those guys.

Oh, they make all the mistakes losing teams make. They freelance on defense. They drop easy passes. They miss blocking-scheme adjustments. They run when they should stop and stop when they should run.

No, they're not good football players.

But they keep coming. They're playing football, playing in a situation many would consider hopeless, but they keep playing. They're *football players*. They keep coming back. It isn't easy to keep coming back.

The Kalaheo team walks by. And keeps walking by. And keeps walking by. The line seems to last forever,

**KALANI SIMPSON — Honolulu Star-Bulletin**

**Age:** 33

**Colleges:** Dana (Neb.) College (played NAIA football)

**Background:** Simpson came home to Hawaii to become the *Star-Bulletin's* sports columnist in 2001. Previously, he'd worked as managing editor at *Nebraska Sports America* magazine, where his pieces on Husker football won FWAA third-place awards for feature and column writing in 2000, and at tiny papers in Nebraska and Iowa, covering "Hoosiers"-style high school sports. His wife, Jen, puts up with living 3,800 miles from her beloved Cornhuskers.



and some of them are BIG.

Weren't they 0-8 last year?

"Yeah, but that was in the Red," Taguchi says. Now the Mustangs have dropped down to the lower White division, where Kalani was winless. "It's like night and day between our two leagues," Taguchi says. "It's like night and day."

The pregame speech comes in the dark, on bleachers behind the backstop of the baseball field below Kaiser's stadium. A sprinkler Sh!-Sh!-Sh!-es a few feet away, and the national anthem drifts down from above.

"Believe in each other no matter what happens," Taguchi says. "This is all we've got right here.

"You are Kalani football."

And then they walk up the stairs, toward the sound of the band and out into the light.

On the first play from scrimmage Jason Leong — and this guy can't weigh more than 140 pounds *in uniform* — makes a tremendous stick, and the Kalani sideline goes nuts. On the second play, Kalaheo completes a 32-yard fade.

And it's on.

Somehow, these guys look even skinnier in full pads. It's overwhelming how overmatched Kalani is at every position. After every play a Falcon is holding a body part in obvious pain. After the second series two-way lineman Jason Deguzman, a captain, is out. Shoulder.

He goes back in.

And this much is obvious, too: *This could be the toughest team in the state.*

A Falcon makes it to the sideline, collapses to all

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# Features (continued)

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fours, heaving, thinking about throwing up in the long-jump pit. A helmet to the stomach. One play later the same thing happens to another guy, but the trainer is still busy with the first, so the second is told just to lie down next in line. Two teammates side by side, writhing in pain in the grass.

They went back in.

They all did, time after time, down by touchdown after touchdown, they kept throwing their bodies back into that game.

They have no business playing football, but they do. They dive at extra points down by seven touchdowns (they would block two).

In the final seconds of the first half two 15-yard penalties have Kalani knocking on the door. Finally, Preston Pires lofts a long ball just as he is hit, and Jared Diseria makes a great diving grab as time expires. Touchdown!

The big man, Shane Pfeiffer, comes bounding off the field: "Give me some love, baby! Give me some love!"

"We got the momentum back!" somebody yells.

It was 33-7.

At halftime Taguchi tells them, "Quit looking back at the scoreboard. That's my responsibility."

This is the other side of high school football. Somebody loses. Sometimes you lose a lot. That's the hard part. It's easy to get up for winning. It's easy to stay up when there is some tangible evidence for believing

something can be done.

Taguchi wants to teach these guys about life, win or lose. He thinks they'll be better people just for having played football, just for having been on this team. He believes in the experience of playing football. Learning from it. That's the most important thing.

But later, in his office, he admits to wanting more. "I want to give these guys the feeling of knowing how it feels like to win," he says. "Of being on the other side of the ball for once."

In the second half, denial sped away with every Jacobe Akiu touchdown sprint. They would lose again. All that was left was to keep fighting, to keep throwing their bodies out there again and again and again. To keep playing football.

Blane Tanabe picked off a tipped pass and ran. The defense came off the field screaming.

At that moment they felt it. At that moment, they knew.

In the darkness, they cruised down Kalaniana'ole Highway toward home. "Alma mater," a voice says, and the boys begin to sing. It was low, somber, dignified, the familiar ritual soothing the still fresh wounds of yet another loss. This is high school football. They are football players. The song was light on melody, heavy on bass, and stopped just as the doors opened. It was 24 straight now. The state's toughest team got off the bus.

# President's column (continued)

*(Continued from page 2)*

Justice.

The letter, which was endorsed by myself, FWAA executive director Steve Richardson and two other FWAA officers, suggests that, unlike college basketball, whose polls are nothing more than conversation pieces because the national champion is decided by a three-week tournament every March, college football has two major polls that have great significance.

Among other things, the 150-member ACSMA — while understanding that some coaches took on the responsibility of voting for 2004 under a condition of anonymity — would still like the coaches votes (with voters' names) to be released each week for public review. The ACSMA has suggested a compromise option in 2004 — only the final ballot that determines the BCS national championship game would be made public. But they want all coaches' ballots with names released in 2005 during the entire season.

This appears unlikely given the response by Teaff,

who says he will raise the issue of final ballots being made public later this season.

The ACSMA suggests publishing the results on the websites of ESPN, *USA Today*, the AFCA and the BCS.

I know there is the fear that instituting either idea might cause some coaches to shy away from participating. But look at the flip side. If the coaches go on the record, no one will be able again to second guess their motivation or integrity.

If they do not, then the BCS should stand up and give the coaches' poll the boot. It wouldn't be that great of a loss.

I have to admit I lost some respect for the AFCA last year when Teaff informed voting coaches they were contractually obligated to select the winner of the LSU-Oklahoma game in the Sugar Bowl as their national champion, even though USC was ranked No. 1 in both final regular-season polls.

This is another chance for the coaches to step up and do the right thing for the right reasons.



# Game: Adam Thompson

*Comment of the judge, Gene Duffey: Great lead, which succinctly tells you how little recent football tradition Baylor possesses and how embarrassing it was to get beaten by the Bears. Good quote showing how lightly the Colorado players took Baylor. Good use of facts, pointing out that Baylor ranked No. 94 in defense against a weak schedule. There was an easy to read description of how the upset occurred.*

**By ADAM THOMPSON**  
*The Denver Post*

WACO, Texas — The goalposts at Floyd Casey Stadium rank among the least endangered in college football.

At least they did before Saturday, when a Baylor team that had gone 364 days since its last lead in a Big 12 game captured its fifth league victory in the conference's eight-year history.

To have that 42-30 win come against Colorado, the two-time defending North Division champion, made falling goalposts even more of a foregone conclusion. There may have been only 23,147 fans in the stands, but there were more than enough ecstatic students to bring aluminum to grass.

Buffaloes linebacker Akarika Dawn may be just a sophomore, but having grown up in Texas, he knows enough about the Bears' poor recent history to put this conference play-opening loss, which dropped CU to 2-3, in perspective.

"It's a surprise Baylor scored on us, basically. Baylor. That's not supposed to happen," he said. "They're turning that program around. ... They took it to us."

The Buffs blew three leads, including a 23-14 third-quarter edge, to lose a game that most interviewed admitted stings more than blowouts to Washington State and Florida State did. But like those two losses, this one happened because of a second-half collapse.

"We just didn't get in sync," CU coach Gary Barnett said of the second half. "I don't know what sync means anymore right now."

From the other locker room, new Bears coach Guy Morriss celebrated his first conference win in his first try by saying: "It just came down to a game of willpower today. Our kids just refused to collapse and crater."

Baylor (3-2) grew more bold with each CU mistake. The Bears seized control with 7 minutes, 27 seconds left in the third quarter, when safety Derrick Cash sacked quarterback Erik Greenberg, causing a fumble that linebacker Jamaal Harper returned for a 7-yard touchdown. The hosts went up 28-23 and had the lead for good.

A fumbled snap on CU's next drive led to a 3-yard rushing touchdown — the Bears' third trip to the end

**ADAM THOMPSON —**  
*The Denver Post*

**Age:** 29

**College:** Graduated from Cornell with a B.A. in English.

**Background:** Thompson has been with the *Post* for five years. Previously he worked for the Ames (Iowa) Tribune for two years. He covered the Colorado beat before taking his current as Nuggets beat writer last December. He has been honored in the FWAA writing contest the last three years, though this is his first first-place award. He was the last man off the bench on the worst high school basketball team in New York City in 1993.



zone in 3:15 — for Rashad Armstrong. The senior pounded the Buffs for 166 yards and two scores on 37 carries.

"We couldn't tackle him," Barnett said. "We're just getting outmanned up front. It's been that way for three weeks now. I don't know that there's any answers for us there, either."

Baylor's rush defense entered the game ranked 94th in the nation against an unremarkable schedule. But it became the latest unit to silence a recently proud CU running game that made four position changes on the offensive line during a bye week.

"Obviously, I don't think we did a very good job of that," tailback Brian Calhoun said of his team's ground game. "Toward the end, we didn't really go toward the run. But we had an opportunity, and we really didn't make the best of it."

The Buffs netted just 57 yards on the ground and could not get a single yard at the point they most needed one.

Down 35-30 to start the fourth quarter, CU's struggling defense handed the offense a seemingly sure thing when Dawn sacked quarterback Aaron Karas and end Gabe Nyenhuis recovered Karas' fumble on Baylor's 9-yard line.

On fourth-and-goal from the 1, Bears defenders Justin Crooks and Maurice Lane ate up Calhoun at the 3 to preserve the lead. Now fully confident, the Bears made only simple running calls — the way the Buffs often did at their best in 2001 and 2002 — on a 97-yard, eight-play drive capped by Armstrong's 55-yard touchdown to put his team up 42-30.

Greenberg threw his only interception, to defensive back James Todd, on the next drive, which finished Greenberg's day. But he had a strong game before that,

*(Continued on page 12)*

# Loose deadline: Bruce Feldman

Comment of the judge, Gene Duffey: A compelling story made better by a good angle with fine writing. Story made you feel like you were part of the receiving team along with Neil Parry, anxiously waiting to get on the field. Good job including history of San Jose State football and great quotes from the coach.

**By BRUCE FELDMAN**  
*ESPN The Magazine*

SAN JOSE — Twenty-five surgeries felt easy compared to watching all those damn third down-and-long conversions Nevada kept making Thursday night. After each made first down, he would drop his head and walk down to the end of his team's sideline, knowing all eyes were on him each step he took.

Waiting to get into the action, for San Jose State's Neil Parry, meant waiting for the Spartan defense to force Nevada to punt. And that wasn't looking as reasonable as it sounds. He would give himself distance from his teammates as he counted down the moment he'd waited three years for. Then when third down would come, Parry would mesh back into the "hotbox," right in the middle of the punt team and wait for his moment. Too bad he'd have to endure a little more time. Nevada would march down the field to score on their first drive.

Twenty minutes later, the Wolfpack would have another third-and-nine. His teammates would smack him on the butt or give him a pat on the shoulder pad as Parry would jog 30 yards towards the 50-yard-line to meet up with the punt team back in the hot box. False alarm. Nevada converted on another pass. First down. Parry would pop out his mouthpiece and tuck it inside the bars of his facemask and wander down to the other end of the sideline. The Pack would rip off another long touchdown drive and Parry could only clap and try and cheer on his teammates. Nevada, a team that was third-to-last in the WAC in third down conversions at 26 percent entering the game, would hit on its first seven third-down attempts and Parry would have to wait till after halftime for his shot.

"It's so frustrating," admitted Nick Parry, Neil's father at halftime. "I see him put his helmet on and then take it off and start pacing, but I'm sure he's in there trying to pump up his defense."

It sounds corny, but this is the way Hollywood would've wanted it.

Three years ago, Neil Parry was sprinting downfield, covering a kickoff in the third quarter of a game against Texas-El Paso, when a teammate was knocked down and rolled into Parry's leg. Parry heard the bones snap.

**BRUCE FELDMAN — ESPN**  
*The Magazine*

**Age:** 34

**Colleges:** Graduated from Miami (Fla) in 1992, majoring in history and communications.

**Background:** Feldman has had stories reprinted in Best American Sports Writing each of the last three years. In 2003, he won first-place in the Enterprise category of the FWAA's best writing contest. His first book, *Cane Mutiny: How the Miami Hurricanes Overturned the Football Establishment* came out in September. He lives in Manhattan Beach, Calif., where he is still trying to control a "power draw."



His fibula and tibia burst through his skin. Still, his first thought was that his team had a shot at a bowl game and the coach's son realized instantly that he would miss it.

What he never could've imagined was that 48 hours later, he would have to have his right leg amputated.

Turns out, serious infections had set in and Parry had little choice.

The week Parry had his leg amputated, his brother Josh, a star linebacker for the Spartans, wanted to quit football. What was the point, he thought. Wasn't it football that cost his kid brother his leg? Neil talked him out of it. Keep playing for me, he said. Play for both of us. Josh did, making 17 tackles against Nevada the next game. He has pressed on to an NFL career with the Philadelphia Eagles. Truth is, Josh is driven by Neil, who vowed, even after his leg injury, that someday he would play again. His story became big news for a program that fell off the radar a long time ago. President Clinton even called Neil.

Six weeks after the injury, Neil stepped onto the field at Spartan Stadium. He was designated a co-captain for the season finale against Fresno State and he hobbled on crutches alongside his brother for the pre-game coin toss. Ten months after the injury, Parry, fitted with a prosthesis, was back at practice.

The ring around Spartan Stadium speaks about a gridiron legacy. There are the names of Pop Warner, Bill Walsh, Dick Vermeil, John Elway's dad Jack, all proud former Spartans. It seems out of place given that the stadium is among the smallest in I-A and that more than

*(Continued on page 11)*

# Loose deadline (continued)

*(Continued from page 10)*

half the place was empty. It almost always is. That's how it usually works when you're one of those BCS stepchildren. On this night, San Jose State was honoring one of its legends at halftime, 49ers Pro Bowl quarterback Jeff Garcia, but that wasn't what this night was about. There was something bigger unfolding. Scattered around the stadium were old men and teenage boys wearing Parry's No. 32.

San Jose State was trailing 32-17 midway through the third quarter and had Nevada in a third-and-five deep in its own territory. The crowd, which seemed to be outnumbered by the media, got to its feet. An old, bald man wearing a Spartans jersey who looked like Grandpa from The Munsters banged on a big tin drum, firing up the fans. The Spartans on the sidelines waved their arms and pumped their fists. And then, Nevada's quarterback, a skinny junior named Andy Heiser, hit on another third-down pass. First down. Figures, on this night Andy Heiser was looking like Andy Heisman.

The annual NCAA football stat guide is as thick as the New York City yellow pages, but for all the data packed into there, you will find no information about players competing with prosthetic limbs. Best anyone can tell, there has been one non-kicker, Richard Busacca, a defensive tackle for I-AA Marist College in the early '90s. To get on the field, Parry understood he would have to earn his way there. Coach Fitz Hill had been very clear, that there would be no "token" gesture. "If he does not do his job," Hill said, "he will be replaced, just like anybody else."

Being allowed to play was almost as hard as being able to play. Last year, Parry had another hurdle to clear. His insurance carrier, Mutual of Omaha, threatened to cancel its lifetime coverage for Parry's prostheses. Then when Mutual of Omaha reconsidered its position, Parry's leg started to bother him. "Sure he wondered, 'when is all this red tape gonna end,' but he never wavered," says his dad. "Never."

Last February, Parry underwent another surgery to remove nerve endings in his leg. He also was fitted with a new, lighter, more comfortable prosthetic leg that weighed less than three pounds, almost two pounds lighter than his first one. That increased his speed and mobility. The 6-1, 175-pound fifth-year senior worked out every morning this summer on his own, getting up before dawn to ready himself for his latest comeback. He began running with his new leg in July and didn't experience any significant pain. He then passed his next test when he returned to practice Aug. 15. He admits he still gets "phantom" pain in his leg, but added that it's getting less

and less.

Two weeks ago, Neil phoned his old man. Told him his teammates voted him to be a captain for the Nevada game. "I had tears in my eyes," his father says. He broke down again when he watched Neil come out of the tunnel, back in full uniform. "I was blubbering," says the old coach, his eyes still watery. "It's terrible when you have to watch a fat guy cry." Josh made the five-hour flight from Philly too. "It felt like I was coming from Japan that flight took so long," he said. "I broke down too. Tonight brought back a lot of memories." The tears started to fill up in the barrel-chested NFL guy's eyes too. "He's taught me so much."

Finally, on the last play of the third quarter, the Spartans defense held. On third-and-inches, Nevada tailback Chance Kretschmer tried to go off right tackle, but State cornerback Trestin George dragged him down for a one-yard loss. The Spartans sideline erupted. Trouble was, a flag went down right near Kretschmer. George was called for a facemask. Another Nevada first down.

Then, with 13:54 and Nevada facing a third-and-22, Parry buckled his chinstrap. Nevada ran a draw play. Fourth down. The crowd chanted "Parry ... Parry ... Parry." He sprinted onto the field with the rest of the punt return team. He lined up at left tackle and jostled with Nevada's Carl LeGrone at the line as the Spartans tried to set up a return left. After the kick, Parry hustled back, looking for someone to block, but the play would be over before he could line someone up.

You wouldn't have known from watching his stride that this was a kid missing a leg. Sure, he lumbered a little, but he's not the first person to put pads on and not have Carl Lewis' form. Parry was mobbed by his teammates as trotted off the field. In the stands, his big brother dropped his head between his knees. His father got a lump in his throat. "I was mad," Neil said after the game. "I really didn't do anything. It wasn't how I pictured it. All I wanted to do was go out there and hit somebody."

The Spartans went on to lose. Terrible tackling, coach Hill explained. His team just doesn't get to hit enough at practice. Course, he pointed out, he's afraid to have too much contact when his squad only has 69 guys on scholarship and he can't risk an injury. "But we'll take Neil's lesson and we'll use him as a role model."

So will others, said Mike Norell, the designer of Parry's new leg. "I have 450 patients and at least 449 of 'em were watching," said Norell. "He's an inspiration and he may have started something here."

## Game (continued)

*(Continued from page 9)*

completing 16-of-29 passes for 346 yards and two touchdowns.

Greenberg's right hand had been smashed between his helmet and a Baylor defender's the play before. Joel Klatt tried to revive the team without his shoulder completely healed, but threw his first career interception instead, the Buffs' fourth turnover of the day.

For all the pain Baylor football has endured in recent years, Saturday's game surely served as a shot of optimism. Todd put it succinctly by saying, "We needed

this."

The Buffs are in a very different place now, having lost what was probably the easiest game on their schedule. Both teams' showings the rest of the season will tell if this game ranks among CU's all-time embarrassments, along with its consecutive losses to Drake in 1979 and 1980.

"It just seemed like we were flat out there," defensive tackle Brandon Dabdoub said. "I don't know what the problem is with that. We need to hurry up and correct it real quick."

## Enterprise (continued)

*(Continued from page 6)*

"It's a lot more fun to come to work here now than it was a year ago."

And a lot more fun for fans at games.

Bohl's biggest accomplishment may be lifting the ban on alcohol at Memorial Stadium, which allowed for more festive tailgating activities.

Imagine that, fun at a college football game. Lawrence hasn't seen that since 1995.

One of the men in charge of creating that type of atmosphere says the work must begin in earnest.

"We've got to start thinking about football year-round," Perkins said. "We should start talking about next year today."



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