



NEWS RELEASE

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West Virginia's Tavon Austin To Receive The Jet Award April 4 *Heisman Trophy Winner Billy Cannon named Nostalgia Player*

Omaha, Neb. – Tavon Austin, West Virginia's all-purpose running back and kick receiver will receive the Johnny "The Jet" Rodgers NCAA Return Specialist Award in a ceremony in Omaha, Neb. April 4. Austin was selected by a panel of sports writers and broadcasters from around the country and by Rodgers.

In addition to the award for Austin, Billy Cannon, Heisman Trophy winner and member of the College Football Hall of Fame, will receive the Nostalgia Player Award for his performance in 1959.

The award event will benefit the Johnny Rodgers Youth Foundation's charitable programs. The event will raise money for scholarships for underprivileged high school graduates to attend Metro Community College to pursue associates degrees.

Along with "The Jet" Award, Austin was also the recipient of All-American honors from several media authorities, including *Sports Illustrated*, *Associated Press* and *American Football Coaches Association*. Austin was also named All-Purpose Performer of the Year and college football's most versatile player. He is West Virginia's career leader in receptions, receiving yards, kick return yards and kick return touchdowns.

"The Jet" Award is named for Johnny "The Jet" Rodgers, the 38th Heisman Award winner, and the first Heisman winner from the University of Nebraska Lincoln. Rodgers was elected to the National College Football Hall of Fame. According to College Football News, Rodgers is "the greatest kick returner in college football history."

"The Jet" award trophy was designed and cast by Omaha artist Joe Putjenter and depicts Rodgers' escape from OU's Greg Pruitt in the 1971 NU/OU game.

Attending the award presentation ceremony, in addition to Rodgers, will be keynote speaker John Heisman.

The National College Football Return ceremony and banquet is set for 6:30 p.m. Thursday, April 4, at the Omaha Hilton in Downtown Omaha, Neb. Presenting sponsor for the inaugural event is RFD-TV.

Along with Austin, the other two finalists for the Jet Award were Mike Edwards of the University of Hawaii and Marcus Murphy of the University of Missouri.

For more information, please visit <http://www.TheJetAward.com>.