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NOTRE DAME WINS 2017 JOE MOORE AWARD AS MOST OUTSTANDING OFFENSIVE LINE UNIT

Physicality and All-American Talent Impressed Voters

SOUTH BEND, IND. – December 19, 2017 — The Joe Moore Award announced today that the University of Notre Dame’s offensive line is the recipient of the 2017 Joe Moore Award (JMA) for Most Outstanding Offensive Line Unit in College Football. In a presentation from the Guglielmino Athletic Complex on the Fighting Irish campus, the offensive line was presented with college football’s biggest trophy.

The Joe Moore Award trophy, crafted by legendary sports sculptor **Jerry McKenna**, is the largest trophy in college football that weighs more than **800 pounds** and is more than six feet wide by nearly seven feet tall. As is tradition, the trophy has been made available to Notre Dame to display on their campus until the 2018 winner is announced.

“The thing voters felt separated Notre Dame’s O-line this year from the other deserving units was their technique and how they consistently finished their blocks,” said **Cole Cubelic**, SEC Network Sideline Analyst and Chairman of the Joe Moore Award voting committee (as Chairman, Cubelic does not vote). “As impressive as the other Finalists and Semi-Finalists were, no one consistently finished blocks in 2017 like Notre Dame, and that really seemed to make the difference this year in the eyes of the voters.”

As this year’s recipient of college football’s biggest trophy, Notre Dame was selected by a voting body comprised of experts who played or coached the offensive line position at the highest levels. This includes all current offensive line coaches at the Division I/FBS level, as well as former players, coaches, and colleagues of Coach Moore, the JMA voting committee, and select media. The Fighting Irish were narrowly selected over fellow finalists **Alabama** and **Auburn**.

“This year proved to be difficult because of how well each of the Finalists displayed the award criteria throughout the entire season,” said **Barrett Jones**, two-time consensus All-American, National Champion, and Joe Moore Award voting committee member. “It really came right down to the end.”

Each of this year’s Finalists presented compelling arguments to be crowned the winner, which made this the closest race in the three-year history of the Joe Moore Award. Through their impressive play on the field, the O-line units for Alabama and Auburn each exemplified what the Joe Moore Award is about and were more than deserving of the honor of being named a 2017 Joe Moore Award Finalist.

“The O-line position is extremely difficult to evaluate, especially when doing so for entire units with different styles of play,” said **Randy Cross**, three-time All-Pro with the San Francisco 49ers, College Football Hall of Famer, CBS college football analyst, and JMA voting committee member. “That is why we thoroughly go through each of the finalists’ season-long highlight reels and multiple back-to-back quarters of game film. The focus on the film study is the only way the 200+ voting body can properly and credibly evaluate the nuances of the award criteria that would otherwise be difficult to see.”



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Notre Dame Fighting Irish Team Notes

- The Notre Dame Offensive Line Unit was the major force that carried the Fighting Irish from a 4-8 record a season ago to a 9-3 record in 2017, with wins over three (3) Top 25 ranked opponents.
- Notre Dame's Offensive Line is the first O-Line ever in the history of the Football Writers Association of America to have two (2) of its linemen garner first-team All-American honors in the same season (the first FWAA All-American team was in 1944).
- Notre Dame's Offensive Line is the first O-Line to have two (2) of its linemen garner first-team All-American honors by the AP since 1931.
- In arguably their strongest performance of 2017, the Fighting Irish handily beat Pac-12 Champion #8 USC Trojans 49-14. In that game, the O-Line Unit paved the way for the Fighting Irish to rush for 377 Rushing Yards and five (5) Rushing Touchdowns.

Notre Dame Fighting Irish Advanced Data and Analytics - *provided by STATS*

- Ground Attack: Notre Dame averaged 279.1 Rushing Yards Per Game (7th FBS)
- Explosive Runs: The Fighting Irish had 39 runs of 20+ yards (3rd FBS)
- Clean Pockets: Despite long developing pass play concepts, Notre Dame's O-line created a Clean Pocket (pass pro opportunities with no pressure allowed by the OL) on 77% of its Pass Plays (vs FBS average of 72.8%)
- Explosive Plays: The Fighting Irish had an Explosive Play (20+ yards) on 9.3% of their offensive plays (13th FBS)
- Room to Run: The Fighting Irish averaged 4.17 Yards Before Contact (YBC) this season (t-4th FBS)

Offensive Line Coach: Harry Hiestand

Head Coach: Brian Kelly

About the Joe Moore Award

The JOE MOORE AWARD is named after **Joe Moore**, widely regarded as one of the best offensive line coaches in college football history, and is the only major college football award to honor a unit. The award annually recognizes the nation's Most Outstanding Offensive Line Unit that best displays toughness, effort, teamwork, consistency, technique and finishing. The voting body is comprised solely of people who played or coached the position, including all of the current offensive line coaches at the Division I/FBS level as well as former players, coaches, colleagues of Coach Moore and select media.

About the Joe Moore Foundation for Teamwork

The Foundation for Teamwork is a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to fostering the essential aspect of all great societal endeavors: teamwork. Our mission is to bring that spirit of collective achievement not only to sports, but also to schools, organizations, businesses and communities. Find out more at joemooreaward.com and follow the Joe Moore Award on Instagram ([@joemooreaward](https://www.instagram.com/joemooreaward)), Twitter ([@joemooreaward](https://twitter.com/joemooreaward)) and Facebook at www.facebook.com/JoeMooreAward.

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