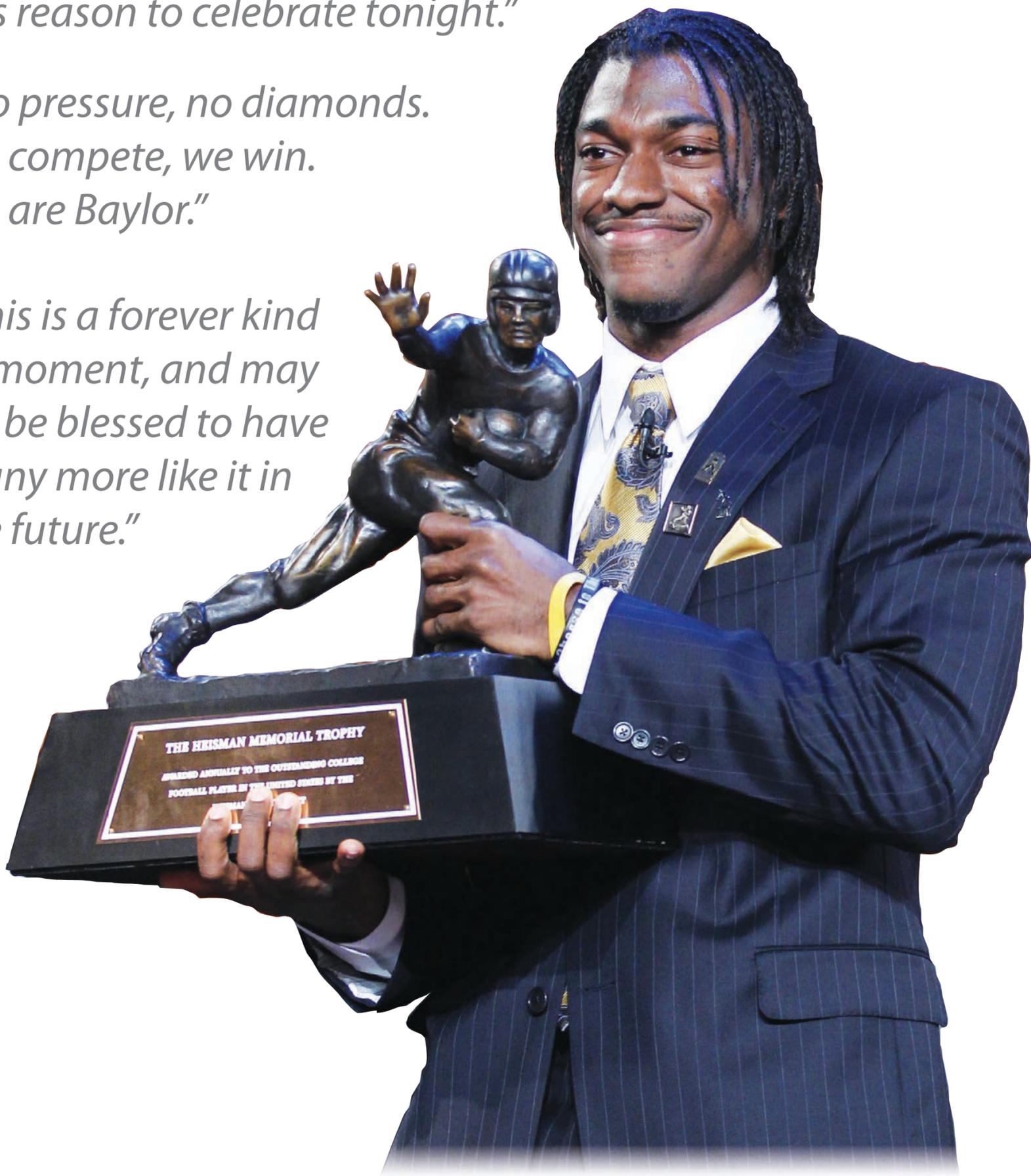


"Everybody associated with Baylor University has reason to celebrate tonight."

"No pressure, no diamonds. We compete, we win. We are Baylor."

"This is a forever kind of moment, and may we be blessed to have many more like it in the future."



IT'S OURS!

Griffin III stiff-arms preconceptions, brings Baylor first Heisman

By TYLER ALLEY
SPORTS EDITOR

Junior quarterback Robert Griffin III approached the Heisman ceremony as he has approached all media events this semester, with an air of dignity, glory to God and a sense of humor.

Even on the national stage, standing next to Stanford quarterback Andrew Luck, he pulled up his pants legs and showed off a pair of red and blue Superman socks complete with capes on the back side.

"Well, now that my socks are out there I got nothing to lose, right?" he said to get some laughs from the audience.

When the announcement finally came that Baylor had just earned its first Heisman trophy in history, and while Bears everywhere roared with ecstasy and chanted "R-G-3," Griffin shook hands with the other candidates and his head coach, Art Briles. He then walked back to

hug his parents, his sister and his fiancée, before finally walking on stage to accept the trophy.

"This moment right here is unbelievably believable," Griffin said to begin his acceptance speech. "It's unbelievable because in the moment, we're all amazed when great things happen. It's believable because great things don't happen without hard work. The great coach Art Briles always says great things only come with great effort. We've certainly worked for this. That's why everybody associated with Baylor University has a reason to celebrate tonight."

Griffin received 1,687 points, beating out Stanford quarterback Andrew Luck (1407), Alabama running back Trent Richardson, Wisconsin running back Montee Ball and LSU cornerback Tyrann Mathieu.

"It was so well-deserved by Robert Griffin," Luck said. "It was very hard to be upset."

Griffin joins a group, known as the "Heisman fraternity," that includes some of the greatest names in football history.

"It's paramount, but it's not just me," Griffin said. "Baylor is always forever in this fraternity as well. We had nobody hanging up, but now we at least have one. And hopefully we'll have more in the future. To be a part of these guys behind me, be a part of greatness, you can't ask for more. Not only are they great football players, but they're great people."

Griffin's high school football coach, head coach Jack Welch of Copperas Cove High School, said he was very emotional following the announcement.

"I actually cried. Tears of joy," Welch said. "It's like a dream come true. These things just don't happen. It's Robert's victory, but it's also a victory for the area, our school Baylor."

Welch said Griffin has matured very well as a football player, and Briles and his staff have done a great job grooming

and shaping him.

For weeks now, members of the media have been placing doubt in Griffin's ability to win the Heisman, including one memorable quote from Kirk Herbstreit who said, "He's from Baylor. He's not going to win the Heisman." Griffin was asked if he had the last laugh.

"We're still trying to laugh some more," he responded. "They told Tyrann he couldn't play, and look at him at LSU doing great things. They told me I couldn't play quarterback, and I'm at Baylor doing the best job I possibly can. They might say it couldn't happen at Baylor, but that's why it's college football, and that's why we play every Saturday."

Griffin first gained national Heisman attention after Baylor's opening game of the season, when the Bears defeated then-No. 14 TCU in a dramatic 50-48 game. Griffin opened the year with 359 passing yards, five touchdown passes and a big third-down reception on a trick play

during what proved to be the game-winning field goal drive.

In what has come to be known as Griffin's Heisman moment, he threw for 479 yards and four touchdowns against then-No. 5 Oklahoma, including the game-winning, 34-yard touchdown pass to junior receiver Terrance Williams with eight seconds left.

On the season, Griffin completed 74 percent of his throws for 3,998 passing yards with 36 touchdowns and just six interceptions, earning him the Davey O'Brien Award for best collegiate quarterback in the nation. He also ran for 644 yards and nine touchdowns this season.

Griffin was also named the Big 12 Offensive Player of the Year by the Associated Press.

Welch said he's very proud of Griffin and he texts him all the time. What did Welch text him after the Heisman announcement?

"I texted him, 'Praise God.'"

The tale of 10

May 17, 2008

Griffin wins the Big 12 400-meter hurdle race at the conference meet after graduating Copperas Cove one semester early.

Aug. 28, 2008

In the Bears' season opener against No. 23 Wake Forest, coach Art Briles replaces starting quarterback Kirby Freeman with Griffin. Griffin breaks a 22-yard run, during which he fakes out a defender and dodges the tackle, and makes national highlights despite the Bears losing 41-13.

Nov. 15, 2008

Fans receive a breath of fresh air when Griffin helps Baylor rout Texas A&M 41-21 to snap the Bears' four-game losing streak and keep the team from finishing the Big 12 in last place. Griffin throws two touchdowns and rushes for 56 yards.

Sept. 27, 2009

It is revealed Griffin has a season-ending ACL injury suffered in Baylor's 68-13 win over Northwestern State. Under replacement Nick Florence, the Bears finish the season 4-8.

Oct. 23, 2010

Griffin throws for 404 yards and four touchdowns as Baylor beats Kansas State and becomes bowl eligible for the first time since 1994.

Sept. 2, 2011

A national ESPN audience watches Baylor drive down the field, aided by a trick play in which Griffin catches a Kendall Wright pass, and score to upset No. 14 TCU 50-48. Griffin records five passing touchdowns.

Nov. 19, 2011

Pandemonium strikes Floyd Casey Stadium following Griffin's game-winning touchdown pass to Terrance Williams against No. 5 Oklahoma. The Bears' 45-38 shocker is broadcast nationally on ABC.

Dec. 3, 2011

Griffin makes his final case for the Heisman, throwing for 359 yards and two touchdowns in Baylor's 48-24 win over Texas. The victory is the Bears' fifth straight and keeps them unbeaten at Floyd Casey Stadium in 2011.

Dec. 4, 2011

At 9-3 on the season, Baylor accepts an invitation to play in the 2011 Valero Alamo Bowl in San Antonio against the Pac 12's Washington Huskies. "It's in Texas, our fans will travel really well and we are excited," Griffin says.

Dec. 10, 2011

Griffin becomes the first Heisman trophy winner in the history of Baylor University. "The hotter the heat, the harder the steel. No pressure, no diamonds. We compete, we win. We are Baylor," Griffin says in his acceptance speech.



MATT HELLMAN | LARIAT PHOTO EDITOR

Above: Robert Griffin III joins fans for a postgame interview after the Bears upset TCU, 50-48, on Sept. 2.

Middle: Griffin III evades a tackler in the Bears' 48-24 win over Texas.

Lower left: With eight seconds left in the game, Griffin launches a pass to receiver Terrance Williams. Williams hauls it in for a touchdown, and Baylor beats then-No.5 Oklahoma, 45-38.

Lower right: Griffin III hurdles a defender in Baylor's 42-39 victory against Missouri at Homecoming.



MATT HELLMAN | LARIAT PHOTO EDITOR



MEAGAN DOWNING | LARIAT PHOTOGRAPHER



MATT HELLMAN | LARIAT PHOTO EDITOR

Students of all years celebrate Heisman win

By KRISTA PIRTLE
SPORTS WRITER

Faith: something that holds the promise of a better tomorrow. Something shown by Heisman Trophy winner Robert Griffin III and the reality of the tomorrow promised by head coach Art Briles when he came to Baylor in 2008.

In its first 12 seasons in the Big 12 conference, Baylor won a total of 11 conference games.

The year before Griffin came to Baylor, 2007, the Bears were 3-9 with no conference wins.

In 2011, the Bears are 9-3 with six conference wins.

For the freshmen, a 9-3 football team is all that they know.

"It's just a really exciting experience to be here and be a part of it," Scottsdale, Ariz., freshman Caelen Demos said. "Our class has never seen failure from Baylor. We just saw RG3 win a Heisman, and that's all we know coming in."

For the sophomores, their first season in the green and gold broke the 15-year bowl drought.

"Oh man, just school pride," Houston sophomore Kaosi Egbunike said. "I was proud to be part of something so huge. I loved being able to wear my Baylor shirt back home with pride."

For the juniors, their first season fell apart early as Griffin tore his ACL.

"I was hopeful that we would be a valiant contender in the Big 12 conference and win the majority of our games, but that didn't happen, which was disappointing," Round Rock junior Nick Cestari said. "When Griffin went down with his injury I figured the worst and that

Baylor football was done for."

For the seniors, their first season brought small slices of heaven as Briles entered his first season and Griffin overtook then junior quarterback Blake Szymanski for the starting job.

"Freshman year, we were just excited that Baylor had a new football coach and a new quarterback," Tomball senior Ryan Anderson said. "Being a first generation Baylor Bear, I didn't know much about the football history here pre-RG3, but from what I heard, there wasn't much to talk about. I couldn't have imagined that the program would have grown so much from then to now."

For a university drowning in its history of a basketball murder and associated with the location of David Koresh, faith for a moment like this seemed impossible.

Off campus, students were screaming and running in the streets. On campus, students packed the Bill Daniel Student Center.

A rough estimate of 1,100 students were spread among the den, eating area, Barfield Drawing Room and the basement.

When the time came for the winner to be announced, the "R" sound was all that was heard before the eruption that will change Baylor Athletics.

"The whole place went nuts," Anderson said.

That excitement has been building since the night of Sept. 2, when the Bears upset then-No. 14 TCU in a thrilling 50-48 season opener.

Since that night, Baylor went 4-0 in November, defeated Oklahoma for the first time, beat Texas



MATT HELLMAN | LARIAT PHOTO EDITOR

Baylor fans cheer in the Bill Daniel Student Center during the Heisman Trophy presentation watch party as No. 10 senior quarterback Robert Griffin III is announced as the 2011 Heisman Trophy winner on Saturday. Roughly 1,100 students were at the SUB to see Baylor receive its first Heisman Trophy.

Tech for the first time in 15 years and defeated Texas for the second straight year.

"Usually the Line is the place where most of the cheering and screaming is happening, but for

the OU game, the entire student section was screaming on every defensive down," Anderson said. "Not a single person was sitting. When that last touchdown pass was thrown, I don't think I've

screamed harder in my life. A random stranger picked me up, but it didn't matter. We were a Baylor family and it was and has been so incredible having such an energetic student section for the four years

I've been here." This is the promise Briles made in a time of drought and defeat. In the words of Griffin, and the rest of the team have made this season "unbelievably believable."

Near and far, alumni rejoice

By TYLER ALLEY
SPORTS EDITOR

It was the worst of times, it was the worst of times.

But that was then.

Students and fans can celebrate the best of times with junior quarterback Robert Griffin III's Heisman victory and the overall success of Baylor football today. Alumni, moreover, can look back at how Baylor football performed during their years and be even more thankful.

"This is just unbelievable," said Russell Trippet, class of 1977. "This is the proudest I've ever been of Baylor. Can't imagine it getting better than this. It's worth all the down times."

Trippet said he grew up in Waco and started going to Baylor games when he was 5 years old, more than 50 years ago. His father was a team doctor, and Trippet would sit on the sidelines. He was in New York when the Heisman winner was announced.

"I just went crazy," he said. "We were at the Baylor network dinner. Everybody went nuts. There were

100 alumni in the room."

Trippet was not the only Bear outside Texas with a celebration story. Whitney Wilson, a political science major from the class of 2000, lives in Denver, Colo., and said she was at a neighborhood grill when the announcement was made.

In an email to the Lariat, Wilson said everyone in the place was rooting for Griffin. Many people teared up during his acceptance speech, which she said was "touching, humble, thoughtful, well spoken and sincere."

Jon Rolph, a member of the class of 2001 with a degree in telecommunications, now resides in Wichita, Kan.

"Like the rest of Baylor nation, I was ecstatic for him and for the university and everybody associated with Baylor," Rolph said.

Rolph came in as a freshman during Baylor's second year in the Big 12 and said there was a lot of excitement with a new coach coming in.

"Then we were awful," he said. "We had six wins total in my four years here. Everybody at school loved the team, poured into it, but

it was never good."

Rachel Goodlad, a journalism major from the class of 2006, also has plenty of bad Baylor football memories. She said Baylor fans from her era were used to having their hopes dashed and did not know 100 percent Griffin would win.

"I think that Baylor fans were expecting it, but people were still holding their breath," Goodlad said. "People in my class were used to the team winning two games, used to hoping for something good to happen then having it slip through our fingers. We wanted to wait until it was official."

Goodlad also said much of the credit for Griffin's victory should go to Baylor's sports information department, which she worked for as a student.

"They deserve a lot of credit for this season," Goodlad said. "Keeping voters up to speed with Robert, making sure he was out there doing interviews, getting his name out there. Making sure hype was out there."

Rolph said he gives much of the credit to Baylor athletic director

Ian McCaw.

"College football now is about great coaching," Rolph said. "McCaw has brought in great coaching and great talent, but it's also talent with integrity and leadership."

Earl Shanks, a member of the 1979 class, comes from a family with multiple generations of Baylor grads. His father went to Baylor, and his father-in-law played in the 1952 Orange Bowl for Baylor. Shanks said his father-in-law "yelled like a kid" when he saw that Griffin had won.

Allen Thompson, from the class of 2002, also said he had a very personal connection with Griffin's victory. He said he takes two things from Baylor's success this season, the first being his ability to enjoy it with the friends he made at school.

"And secondly it reminds me of my father who passed away from cancer in 2008," Thompson said in an email to the Lariat. "He would always call me after any Baylor win regardless of the sport. I know he would have been so proud of not only RG3 but also the entire past two seasons. I couldn't be prouder to be a Baylor Bear."

Doubting Thomas

What Robert Griffin III's skeptics had to say about his Heisman chances

"We don't plan on letting anyone win the Heisman against us."

-Keenan Robinson, Texas linebacker, Nov. 28

"He's from Baylor. He's not going to win the Heisman."

-Kirk Herbstreit, ESPN, Dec. 1

"[Griffin] was wrong on Saturday [Dec. 4] when he declared that Baylor had just won its first Heisman trophy."

-Robert Smith, ESPN, Dec. 5

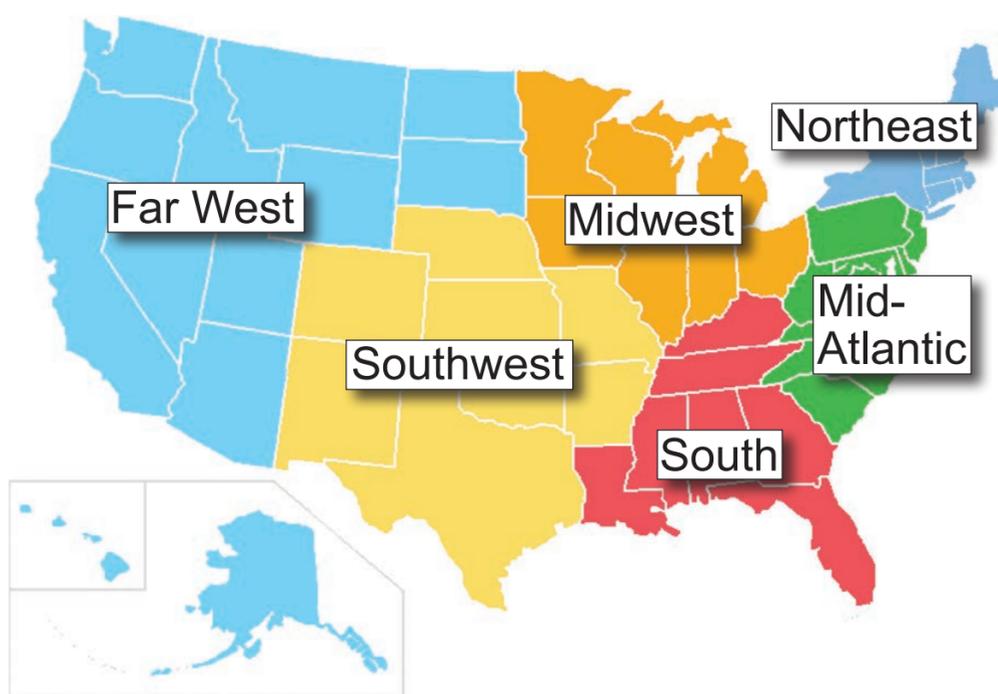
"Nice player, but SEC defenses would have eaten him alive. Haters get a clue."

-Paul Finebaum, Paul Finebaum Radio Network, Dec. 7

The Breakdown

How the media divvied its votes* by region

*3 points for each first place vote, 2 for second, 1 for third



Robert Griffin III, Baylor



Andrew Luck, Stanford



Trent Richardson, Alabama

| Region | Robert Griffin III, Baylor | Andrew Luck, Stanford | Trent Richardson, Alabama |
|--------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Far West | 220 | 315 | 137 |
| Southwest | 381 | 188 | 132 |
| Midwest | 272 | 220 | 125 |
| South | 303 | 182 | 256 |
| Mid-Atlantic | 254 | 248 | 168 |
| Northeast | 257 | 254 | 160 |
| Total | 1,687 | 1,407 | 978 |

Congratulations, RG3!

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