

2001 MIAC Football Athletes of the Week

November 12, 2001

Co-Offensive

Gustavus Adolphus College senior quarterback Joe Thorvig (Stacy, Minn./Totino-Grace HS) completed 21-of-28 passes for 309 yards and five touchdowns to help the Gusties defeat St. Olaf 51-21 in St. Peter. Thorvig got the Gusties off to a very fast start as he went 17-of-23 passes for 252 yards and three touchdowns in the first half as Gustavus led 37-0 at halftime. Thorvig's TD passes were for 6, 10, 14, 20 and 44 yards. He finished his standout career completing 35-of-46 passes for 506 yards and 10 touchdowns with one interception in his final two games. Thorvig finished his career as the Gusties all-time leading percentage passer with a career completion percentage of 58.3%. He also tied the career record for career touchdown passes with 59. Gustavus finished the season with a record of 7-3 overall and 6-3 in the MIAC.

Saint John's University junior wide receiver Blake Elliott (Melrose, Minn.) caught 12 passes for 205 yards and three touchdowns in a 31-0 win over Carleton on Nov. 10 in Collegeville to clinch a share of the MIAC title. Elliott caught touchdown passes of 4, 14 and 25 yards and also had one rush for 11 yards. On the season, Elliott has 55 catches for 865 yards and 12 touchdowns. SJU is 8-2 overall, 8-1 in the MIAC and will open the NCAA playoffs by hosting St. Norbert on Nov. 17.

Co-Defensive

Gustavus Adolphus College senior linebacker Brian Bergstrom (Burnsville, Minn.) compiled 16 tackles (nine solo, seven assisted) in the Gusties 51-21 win over St. Olaf. Bergstrom led a Gustavus defensive effort that held the Oles to 90 yards of total offense in the first half as the Gusties built a 37-0 lead. Bergstrom joined the rare 400 career tackle club in the game as he finished as the Gusties all-time leading tackler with 406 tackles.

Carleton College senior linebacker Scott O'Reilly (Rochester, Minn./John Marshall) tallied 14.5 tackles, nine solo, in Carleton's season finale at Saint John's. O'Reilly added two tackles for losses and forced a fumble, one of four turnovers the Knights' defense forced on the day. O'Reilly led a heroic effort by the Knights, who trailed only 10-0 at the half. O'Reilly ended the season with 346 career tackles, second-best in Carleton history, while tallying 143 tackles on the season (under the old system of reporting) to set a new Carleton single-season record. O'Reilly paced the MIAC in tackles with 106.0, 18.5 ahead of the next-highest total.

Special Teams

Gustavus Adolphus College junior kick returner Andy Traetow (Jackson, Minn.) returned three kicks for 99 yards as the Gusties defeated St. Olaf 51-21 in St. Peter. All three of Traetow's returns led to Gustavus touchdowns. He returned one kickoff for 38 yards in the first quarter to the Gustavus 48-yard line and the Gusties scored five plays later. Later in the third quarter, Traetow returned a kick 44 yards to the St. Olaf 49 and the Gusties scored six plays later to make the score 51-14. Traetow also rushed 20 times in the game for 157 yards and two touchdowns and became the sixth Gustavus running back to rush for 1,000 yards in a season. He returned 16 kicks on the season for 409 yards and an average of 25.6 yards per return.

November 5, 2001

Offensive

Saint John's University junior quarterback Ryan Keating (Minnetonka/Minnetonka HS) was 20-of-41 for 392 yards passing and four touchdowns in a 28-14 win over Concordia-Moorhead on Nov. 3. The 392 yards passing was the seventh-most in SJU single-game history. Keating threw touchdown passes of 17, 26, 38 and 46 yards. On the season, Keating has thrown for 1,681 yards and 21 touchdowns. Keating leads the MIAC with a 162.4 pass efficiency rating. SJU is 7-2 overall, 7-1 in the MIAC.

Co-Defensive

University of St. Thomas junior defensive end Sean O'Leary (Wisconsin Rapids, Wis./Lincoln HS) had 3.5 sacks for 28 yards in losses among his seven tackles in Saturday's 35-6 win at Hamline. O'Leary's sack total was just off the UST single-game record of four and helped the Tommie defense record seven sack on the day and hold Hamline to 223 total yards. O'Leary, in his first season at defensive end, now leads the MIAC with 12.5 sacks in eight games. The Tommies are 7-2 overall and remained tied for first in the MIAC at 7-1.

Bethel College senior cornerback Nate Klint (Shoreview, MN/Mounds View HS) led the Royals defense in their first shutout in the Royals 31-0 win over Augsburg. Klint had 3 solo tackles, 1 forced fumble, 1 fumble recovery, 2 interceptions, and 4 passes defended. He also had 1 kickoff return for 36 yards and held on PAT attempts. Bethel held Augsburg to 27 yards rushing and 163 total yards and forced 8 turnovers. Bethel is 8-1 and plays St. Thomas next Saturday for a share of the MIAC championship.

Special Teams

Saint John's University junior punter Charlie Carr (St. Cloud, Minn./Apollo HS) punted five times for a 48.2 average in a 28-14 win over Concordia-Moorhead on Nov. 3. The 48.2 punting average was the sixth-best average in SJU single-game history. Carr's longest punt in the game was 65 yards. On the season, Carr is the leading punter in the MIAC with a 40.5 average. SJU is 7-2 overall, 7-1 in the MIAC.

October 29, 2001

Offensive

University of St. Thomas quarterback Nick Ambrasas (Junior, St. Paul / Arlington HS) completed 18-of-30 passes for 240 yards and three TDs and no interceptions in the Tommies' 28-27 win over Gustavus to move them into a first-place tie in the MIAC. Ambrasas' three TD passes of 2, 10 and 32 yards all came after he was flushed out of the pocket and narrowly averted sacks. The latter came with 11:00 to go on 4th-and-1 when he found Jon Learn for a 32-yard TD that proved to be the game-winning score. He led a Tommie offense that gained 477 yards, made 8-of-16 third-down conversions and 2-of-4 fourth-down conversions and controlled the ball for 34:25. Ambrasas has thrown 86 consecutive passes without an interception. St. Thomas is 9-3 in MIAC games since Ambrasas became the starting QB in October

2000, and the Tommies have averaged 30 ppg in that stretch. UST is 6-2 overall and 6-1 in the MIAC.

Defensive

Saint John's University junior defensive back James Shafer (Duluth/Park Rapids HS) had a 99-yard fumble return for a touchdown, two interceptions, eight total tackles and four pass break-ups in a 34-0 win over fifth nationally ranked Bethel on Oct. 27, in Collegeville. With under four minutes to play in the first half and Bethel inside the SJU 10-yard line, Schafer picked up a fumble and returned it 99 yards for a touchdown to give SJU a 20-0 lead. Schafer intercepted passes on Bethel's second possession of the game and on the first play of the fourth quarter. On the season, Schafer has 28 total tackles and 11 pass break-ups. SJU is 6-2 overall, 6-1 in the MIAC and tied for the top spot in the MIAC with Bethel and St. Thomas.

Special Teams

Saint John's University senior defensive back Brad Beyer (Utica/Winona Cotter HS) had a blocked punt for a touchdown and two special teams tackles in a 34-0 win over fifth nationally ranked Bethel on Oct. 27, in Collegeville. On Bethel's first possession of the game, Beyer blocked a punt and returned the ball one-yard for SJU's first touchdown of the game. Beyer had eight total tackles in the game for the Johnnies. Beyer now has four blocked punts on the season. SJU is 6-2 overall, 6-1 in the MIAC and tied for the top spot in the MIAC with Bethel and St. Thomas.

October 22, 2001

Offensive

Bethel College running back Mike Johnson (Junior, Pine City, MN / Pine City HS) the Royals to their 21st consecutive regular season win over Carleton (76-2) on Saturday as Johnson scored 5 touchdowns, setting a Bethel single game record. Johnson rushed 23 times for 192 yards (8.3 per carry) and 4 touchdowns in just over 2 quarters of play. Johnson also caught 3 passes for 53 yards and 1 touchdown. His 4 rushing touchdowns tie Bethel's single game record (he also had 4 earlier this season). Johnson has rushed for 952 yards and 14 touchdowns through 7 games. His 14 rushing touchdowns tie Bethel's single season record.

Defensive

St. Olaf College linebacker Matt Lafferty (Junior, Apple Valley, Minn. / Apple Valley HS) had 13.5 total tackles for the game, eleven unassisted and five assisted. Lafferty's biggest play of the game came with 56 seconds left in the 4th quarter as he aggressively pursued the Cobbers quarterback out of the pocket and forced a hurried pass for the unsuccessful two-point conversion and the Ole win.

October 15, 2001

Co-Offensive

Saint John's University quarterback Ryan Keating (Junior, Minnetonka, Minn.) threw for 399 yards and three touchdowns in a 35-20 win over Gustavus Adolphus on Oct. 13, in Collegeville. Keating completed 31-of-45 passes, had one interception and rushed for 16 yards on eight carries. Keating connected with three different receivers on touchdown passes of 15, 15 and 21 yards as SJU built a 28-0 halftime lead. On the season, Keating has thrown for 912 yards, 15 touchdowns, five interceptions with a 57-percent completion percentage. SJU has won four straight and is 4-2 overall, 4-1 in the MIAC.

University of St. Thomas wide receiver Andrew Hilliard (Junior, Woodbury, Minn.), for the second week in a row, broke open a close game with three touchdown catches. He finished with a career-high 194 receiving yards on 10 catches in the Tommies' 28-16 win over St. Olaf. The Oles had pulled within 21-16 with 7:00 remaining when Hilliard made a fingertip catch on a post pattern on a 3rd-and-5 play and finished off a 64-yard TD reception. Hilliard, an Academic All-America candidate with a 3.978 gpa, has missed one game with an injury but in five games has nine TD catches among his 40 receptions for 672 yards. He has 86 catches for 1,503 yards on his career. The Tommies are 4-2 overall and 4-1 in the MIAC in a second-place tie with St. John's behind 5-0 Bethel.

Defensive

Hamline University safety Justin Werner (Senior, Hasting, Minn.) came up with five solo tackles, two interceptions, one fumble recovery and another forced fumble to lead the Pipers to a 47-21 victory over Carleton. Werner forced a fumble and recovered it early in the first quarter, helping Hamline to a 40-0 halftime lead. The win was the first of the season for Hamline.

Special Teams

Saint John's University wide receiver Blake Elliott (Junior, Melrose, Minn.) had a school record 167 punt return yards, including two returned for touchdowns in a 35-20 win over Gustavus Adolphus on Oct. 13, in Collegeville. Elliott returned a punt 66-yards for a touchdown late in the first half to give SJU a 28-0 lead at intermission. In the third quarter, Elliott scored on a 46-yard punt return to give the Johnnies a 35-7 lead. Elliott also had a 41-yard punt return in the first quarter that set up a SJU touchdown. Elliott had 340 all-purpose yards in the game (167 yards on punt returns, 11 yards on kickoff returns, 162 yards receiving) and three touchdowns. On the season, Elliott is averaging 17.2 yards per punt return and 78.2 yards receiving per game.

October 8, 2001

Offensive

Bethel College running back Mike Johnson (Junior, Pine City, Minn. / Pine City H.S.) lead the Royals, seventh-ranked nationally, to a 38-6 win over St. Olaf. Johnson dominated throughout the game in both the passing and running games. Johnson had a career-high 34 carries for 147 yards and four touchdowns. His four rushing TDs ties a Bethel record. Johnson also caught three passes for 48 yards, including a 25-yard reception on fourth down at the beginning of the fourth quarter. Bethel scored shortly after putting the game out of reach.

Defensive

University of St. Thomas linebacker Rick Joslin (Junior, Cambridge, Minn. / Cambridge-Isanti HS) had six solo and five assisted tackles and recorded a key interception that helped the Tommies post a 34-14 win. The Toms led 14-7 when Joslin picked off Augsburg on the first play

from scrimmage in third period. His 10-yard return gave the Tommies the ball at the Augsburg 25-yard-line, and five plays later UST scored to pull ahead 21-7. Joslin led a defense that held the Auggies to 1-for-11 on third-down conversions, 52 passing yards and 186 total yards. The Tommies lead the conference in fewest yards allowed on defense. UST is 3-2 overall and 3-1 in the MIAC, tied for second behind Bethel.

Special Teams

Saint John's University kicker Brandon Keller (First-Year, Bismarck, N.D./St. Mary's Central HS) converted all eight of his extra points in a 56-7 win over Macalester on Saturday, Oct. 6. Keller is now 22-of-23 on extra points in five games for the Johnnies this season. SJU is currently on a three-game winning streak and is 3-2 overall, 3-1 in the MIAC.

October 1, 2001

Offensive

Bethel College wide receiver Joel Olson (Jr., Becker, Minn.) scored on a 26-yard touchdown on Bethel's first offensive play and continued to have career highs in both receptions, yards, and touchdowns as the Royals moved to 4-0 on the season with a 35-6 win over Hamline University. Olson finished the day with 12 catches for 161 yards and 3 touchdowns in just over three quarters of play. In addition to his 26-yard touchdown, he also had scoring receptions of 25 yards and 8 yards. He also threw a 13-yard completion to fullback Mike Johnson.

Defensive

Macalester College defensive end Andrew Porter (Jr., Rogers, MN / Elk River H.S.) led a seven-sack attack as Macalester shut down the Carleton offense in a 13-2 win over the Knights in Northfield. Porter registered 2 1/2 quarterback sacks for 26 yards, increasing his career total to 23 1/2. His first sack came on the game's second play and helped set the stage for Macalester's strong defensive performance. He was credited with six solo tackles and an assisted tackle for the game. Porter is currently among the MIAC leaders in tackles, sacks and tackles for loss.

Special Teams

Saint John's University punter Charlie Carr (Jr., St. Cloud, Minn./Apollo HS) punted six times for an average of 40.5 ypp in a 27-21 win over St. Thomas on Sept. 29, in Collegeville. Carr had one of the key plays of the game when he had a 70-yard punt with 1:51 left in the game. The Johnnies were forced to punt deep in their territory and Carr pinned UST back at their six-yard line to start the final drive of the game. On the season, Carr has a 37.2 average and five punts inside the 20-yard line. Carr is currently the leading punter in the MIAC with a 38.1 average. SJU is 2-2 overall and 2-1 in the MIAC.

September 24, 2001

Offensive

University of St. Thomas running back Jake Barkley (Junior, Plymouth, Minn./Robbinsdale Armstrong HS) on a rainy, soggy day with poor footing, Barkley carried 28 times for 119 yards in the first half to help the Tommies build a 28-0 halftime lead en route to a 42-0 shutout of Carleton. Barkley played just two series in the third quarter and finished with 151 yards on 37 carries. It was his 12th 100-yard rushing game in his last 13 starts, and he now has 2,347 yards in 22 career games. The Tommies improved to 2-0 in the MIAC and 2-1 overall.

Defensive

Bethel College defensive end Jon Foss (Senior, Hinton, IA/Hinton H.S.) dominated from the defensive side of the ball in sixth-ranked Bethel's 36-21 victory over number 26-ranked Gustavus. Foss recorded 10.5 tackles on the day, including seven tackles for loss (31 yards) and three sacks. His constant pressure on Gustavus quarterback Joe Thorvig forced him into completing just seven of his final 14 passes as Bethel held on for the win.

Special Teams

Saint John's University senior Brad Beyer (Utica/Winona Cotter HS) blocked two punts and had five total tackles in a 48-14 win over Augsburg on Sept. 22. Beyer's first block set up a SJU touchdown that gave the Johnnies a 27-7 lead. Beyer's second block set up another SJU touchdown to give the Johnnies a 34-7 halftime advantage. SJU is 1-2 overall, 1-1 in the MIAC.

September 17, 2001

Offensive

St. Olaf College wide receiver Steve Ryan (Sr., So. St. Paul, Minn.) had eight catches for 207 yards and two touchdowns in St. Olaf's 31-28 victory over MIAC powerhouse and last year's national runner-up, Saint John's University. On the first play from scrimmage, Ryan caught an 80-yard touchdown strike from Joe Hammond. Ryan would go on to score a second TD on a fourth down and 22 from the Johnnies' 23-yard line by out jumping the defensive back in the corner of the end zone. Ryan also had two runs for 24 yards. It marked St. Olaf's first win at Collegeville since 1986. The Oles are now 2-0.

Defensive

Saint John's University linebacker Jamie Jones (Jr., Missoula, Mont./Loyola Sacred Heart Jamie) had nine assisted tackles and three interceptions in a 31-28 loss against St. Olaf on Saturday, Sept. 15. The first interception return of 43 yards by Jones came early in the second quarter that set up a touchdown to give the Johnnies a 21-20 lead. On St. Olaf's next possession, Jones picked off a pass to end a late drive. With St. Olaf driving deep in SJU territory in the third quarter, Jones picked off a pass to keep SJU's lead at 21-20. The interception led to a Johnnie touchdown and a 28-20 lead. On the season, Jones has 11 tackles and three interceptions. SJU is currently 0-2 overall and 0-1 in the MIAC.

Special Teams

St. Olaf College punter/kicker Sean Koomen (So., Mankato, Minn - Mankato West HS) kicked the game-winning 22-yard field goal with 41 seconds remaining as St. Olaf won at Saint John's for the first time since 1986. Koomen also kicked two PATs.

September 10, 2001

Offensive

Gustavus Adolphus College running back Andy Traetow (Junior, Jackson, Minn.) rushed 26 times for 179 yards and three touchdowns to help the Gusties defeat nationally ranked Trinity University (Texas), 37-26, in St. Peter, Minn. Traetow also caught two passes for 51 yards and returned two kickoffs for 70 yards. Traetow finished with 300 all-purpose yards which was two away from the Gustavus single game record. He provided the Gusties with several critical plays in the game. Early in the third quarter Traetow broke off a 66-yard touchdown run to cut the Trinity lead to 14-12 and late in the fourth quarter after the Tigers had scored to take a 26-25 lead, he returned the kickoff 50 yards to the Trinity 44-yard line and the Gusties scored what turned out to be the winning touchdown four plays later. Gustavus which is now 1-0 on the season plays at Hamline this Saturday, September 15.

Defensive

Gustavus Adolphus College free safety Zach Zimmer (Junior, Milaca, Minn.) intercepted three passes and recorded eight tackles (4 solo, 4 assists) to help the Gusties defeat nationally ranked Trinity University 37-26 in St. Peter, Minn. Zimmer's first interception came on the Tigers' first series of the day when he grabbed a Roy Hampton pass in the end zone and ran it out to the 10-yard line. His second pick came early in the fourth quarter when he grabbed another Hampton aerial deep in Gustavus territory at the 12-yard line. Then late in the fourth quarter (2:40 remaining) with Trinity driving for the go-ahead touchdown, Zimmer recorded his third interception as he picked Roy Hampton again at the Gustavus 47-yard line and returned it 42 yards to the Trinity 11-yard line.