

January 11, 2012



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**Top Local College Football Athletes to be Honored at
Inaugural Celebration of College Football Awards Dinner on January 31**

Nominees Announced for Defensive and Offensive Player of the Year

Former NFL Coach Bobby Ross to Serve as Keynote Speaker

Hampton Roads, VA — For the first time, the Hampton Roads Sports Commission (HRSC) will host a Celebration of College Football Awards Dinner. The dinner will be held annually to recognize and celebrate the football programs of the Apprentice School, Christopher Newport University, College of William and Mary, Hampton University, Norfolk State University, and Old Dominion University.

The awards dinner will take place on **January 31, 2012 at the Sheraton Norfolk Waterside (777 Waterside Drive, Norfolk) from 6:00pm – 8:30pm**. Awards Dinner tickets are \$50 per person. For individual reservations, go to www.HamptonRoadsSports.org.

The Hampton Roads Sports Commission Player of the Year Awards will be presented to the top offensive and defensive players within the region. Each football program will provide a selection committee with its nominated student athlete for each category. The selection committee, consisting of local sports experts familiar with the school football programs, will then select the student athletes who will receive the Hampton Roads Sports Commission Player of the Year Awards. The top offensive and defensive players will be announced at the January 31 awards dinner.

Defensive Nominees:



Blake Penix
Jesup, GA
Apprentice School
Punter & Place Kicker



B.W. Webb
Newport News, VA
College of William & Mary
Cornerback



Corwin Hammond
Louisville, KY
Norfolk State University
Linebacker



Michael King
Centerville, VA
Christopher Newport University
Linebacker



Delbert Tyler
Monroeville, PA
Hampton University
Linebacker



Ronnie Cameron
Westbury, NY
Old Dominion Univ.
Defensive Tackle

Offensive Nominees:



Larry Peterson
Virginia Beach, VA
Apprentice School
Offensive Line



Jonathan Grimes
Palmyra, NJ
College of William & Mary
Running Back



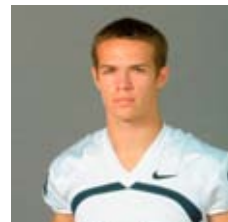
Chris Walley
Tallahassee, FL
Norfolk State Univ.
Quarterback



J.T. Crew
Lynchburg, VA
Christopher Newport University
Offensive Line



David Legree
Brooklyn, NY
Hampton University
Quarterback



Taylor Heinicke
Atlanta, GA
Old Dominion Univ.
Quarterback

During the dinner, **Bobby Ross will serve as keynote speaker.** Ross, a native of Virginia, is a former American football player and coach. He served as the head football coach at The Citadel (1973–1977), the University of Maryland, College Park (1982–1986), the Georgia Institute of Technology (1987–1991), and the United States Military Academy (2004–2006), compiling a career college football record of 103–101–2. Ross was also the head coach of the National Football League's San Diego Chargers from 1992 to 1996 and the Detroit Lions from 1997 to 2000, tallying a career NFL mark of 77–68. He guided his 1990 Georgia Tech squad to a share of the national championship and coached the 1994 San Diego Chargers to an appearance in Super Bowl XXIX. In 1997, Ross was inducted into the Virginia Sports Hall of Fame. Awards include: Bobby Dodd Coach of the Year Award (1990); Paul "Bear" Bryant Award (1990); Sporting News College Football COY (1990); Walter Camp Coach of the Year (1990); Eddie Robinson Coach of the Year (1990); and AFCA Coach of the Year (1991).

Thanks to event sponsors: Williams Mullen (Player of the Year Sponsor), Old Dominion University and Huntington Ingalls Industries (Gold Sponsors). For sponsorship information, please contact Morgan Lang, Associate Executive Director, at mlang@hrccva.com or (757) 664-2573.

About the Hampton Roads Sports Commission (www.HamptonRoadsSports.org)

In February 1999, the Hampton Roads Sports Commission (HRSC) was formed as a private/public partnership among the municipalities of Hampton Roads and the Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce. The Sports Commission's primary function is to attract major amateur athletic events to the area to emphasize regional collaboration. The HRSC promotes Hampton Roads while enhancing the economy and quality of life of its residents by creating and recruiting local and national amateur, military and youth sporting events, while providing unparalleled customer service. Past HRSC events include: the AAU Junior Olympic Games (1998, 2001, 2006, 2010), the National Senior Games (2003), and the Red Cross Heroes Games (2004, 2005). During the past 12 years, the HRSC has generated more than \$168 million in economic impact for the region. The Hampton Roads Sports Commission is an affiliate of the Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce. **Follow us on Facebook (Hampton Roads Sports Commission) and Twitter (HRSC757).**

About the Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce (www.HamptonRoadsChamber.com)

The Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce is a not-for-profit, member-based business organization. The Chamber is a vigorous advocate for the economic success of its nearly 2,000 member businesses, which employ more than 280,000 men and women in southeastern Virginia. The Chamber promotes Hampton Roads' healthy business climate through economic development, public policy initiatives, services and benefits to members. The Chamber is dedicated to creating economic opportunity and enhancing the quality of life in Hampton Roads.

Please contact Lisa Jones at 757-664-2531 or ljones@hrccva.com if you would like to schedule an interview with a HRSC staff member or attend the Awards Dinner. High resolution photos available upon request.