



CONFERENCE USA 5201 N. O'Connor Blvd., Suite 300, Irving, TX 75039 (214) 774-1300

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Contact: Russell Anderson (rdanderson@c-usa.org)

C-USA ANNOUNCES 2011 PRESEASON FOOTBALL ALL-CONFERENCE AWARDS

IRVING, Texas – Houston senior quarterback **Case Keenum**, the 2009 Conference USA Most Valuable Player who missed most of last season with a knee injury, has been chosen as the league's 2011 Preseason Offensive Player of the Year. Keenum headlines the list of preseason football award winners, as chosen by the league's 12 head coaches. Marshall senior DE **Vinny Curry** was named the preseason Defensive Player of the Year, while Tulsa senior return specialist **Damaris Johnson** earned Special Teams Player of the Year honors.

Keenum is back for a sixth year after missing all but three games last year after tearing his ACL at UCLA on Sept. 18. He was the 2009 C-USA MVP and the 2008 Offensive Player of the Year. Keenum enters this season on pace to break NCAA career records for total offense, passing yards, touchdowns, pass attempts and completions. After two-plus games played in 2010, Keenum has 14,448 career yards of total offense (7th), 13,586 passing yards (5th), 107 touchdown passes (8th), 1,626 pass attempts (10th), 1,118 pass completions (7th). He is one of only two players in NCAA Division I history to record multiple 5,000-yard passing seasons and set a school single-season record with 5,671 passing yards in 2009, the third-highest passing total in NCAA Division I-FBS single-season history. Keenum was the leader of the nation's No. 1 team in total offense, scoring offense and passing yards per game in 2009, while ranking as the individual national leader in total offense and passing yards per game.

Curry is one of the top returning defensive players in the nation this fall. He earned first-team All-Conference USA honors as a junior after leading all defensive linemen in the FBS in tackles with 94 total stops (7.83 per game) and ranking fifth in the nation with 12 sacks (1 per game average). Curry's 18 tackles for loss also ranked second in C-USA and placed among the top totals in the country. He has been named to the preseason watch lists for the Chuck Bednarik Award and the Bronko Nagurski Award.

Johnson, last year's Conference USA Special Teams Player of the Year, has firmly established himself in the C-USA and FBS record books as he begins the 2011 season. An *Associated Press* second team All-American selection in 2010, he has led the nation in all-purpose yards in each of the last two seasons, averaging 224 all-purpose yards per game in 2009 and 202 yards per game in 2010. Johnson is already the NCAA's all-time record-holder for all-purpose yards (7,796) and kickoff return yards (3,417). As a wide receiver, Johnson led the Golden Hurricane in receptions (57) and receiving yards (872) last year, while catching four touchdowns.

Tulsa senior QB G.J. Kinne, the 2010 C-USA Offensive Player of the Year, also returns. Last season, Kinne threw for 3,650 yards and 31 touchdowns, while also rushing for 561 yards.

Houston had the most overall preseason selections with six, while defending C-USA Champion UCF had five. SMU and Tulsa each had four preseason all-league choices, while Southern Miss had three.

The 2011 C-USA Football season kicks off on Thursday, September 1, when Memphis hosts Mississippi State. Eleven of the league's 12 teams are in action during opening weekend, with five games scheduled to air on national television.

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2011 C-USA FOOTBALL COACHES PRESEASON AWARDS

Offensive Player of the Year

Case Keenum, Sr., QB, Houston

Defensive Player of the Year

Vinny Curry, Sr., DE, Marshall

Special Teams Player of the Year

Damaris Johnson, Sr., KR/PR, Tulsa

First Team Offense

QB Case Keenum, Sr., Houston
RB Bryce Beall, Sr., Houston
RB Zach Line, Jr., SMU
OL Clint Anderson, Sr., Tulsa
OL Kelvin Beachum, Sr., SMU
OL Matt McCants, Sr., UAB
OL Nick Pieschel, Sr., UCF
OL Chris Thompson, Sr., Houston
WR Patrick Edwards, Sr., Houston
WR Damaris Johnson, Sr., Tulsa
WR Lance Lewis, Sr., East Carolina
TE Adam Nissley, Sr., UCF

First Team Defense

DL Vinny Curry, Sr., Marshall
DL Elliott Henigan, Sr., UAB
DL Cordarro Law, Sr., Southern Miss
DL Taylor Thompson, Sr., SMU
LB Ja'Gared Davis, Jr., SMU
LB Trent Mackey, Jr., Tulane
LB Marcus McGraw, Sr., Houston
LB Korey Williams, Sr., Southern Miss
DB Emanuel Davis, Sr., East Carolina
DB Kemal Ishmael, Jr., UCF
DB Marco Nelson, So., Tulsa
DB Josh Robinson, Jr., UCF

First Team Special Teams

K Danny Hrapmann, Sr., Southern Miss
P Kyle Martens, Sr., Rice
KR Quincy McDuffie, Jr., UCF
PR Patrick Edwards, Sr., Houston
PR Damaris Johnson, Sr., Tulsa