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Purdue's Painter brushes off hype Boilermaker quarterback focus of Heisman campaign.



Purdue's Sports Information Department is going all out to get quarterback Curtis Painter some Heisman attention. Photo provided

By AL LESAR *Tribune Staff Writer*

CHICAGO -- As college football media blitzes go, this one's pretty substantial.

Between a highlight DVD, a "Painting a Masterpiece" calendar and curtispainter12.com, the Purdue media relations office is going all out to promote Boilermaker fifth-year quarterback Curtis Painter for the Heisman Trophy.

"My mom likes it," Painter said. "She thinks it's cool."

Painter's a personable kid from Vincennes who needs a haircut as the start of fall camp is still a couple weeks away. He just shrugs his shoulders at the mound of promotional material scattered around his table.

"It doesn't change me in any way," Painter said. "I'd have my expectations, no matter what anybody was saying about me." One thing people are saying is that he has trouble winning the "big"

game.

"The only way to win the 'big' game is by being consistent," Painter said. "Look at last year. We were playing well leading up to Ohio State (Minnesota and Notre Dame), but we couldn't keep it up."

Painter tries to see the big picture.

"I don't think all this stuff is about me," Painter said. "It's about Purdue football. If somebody picks some of this up and says, 'Maybe I'll check out a Purdue game and see what that's about,' then it's worthwhile."

Mack is back

When Deonte Mack came out of Elkhart Central High School a few years ago, he didn't look like a prototypical Big Ten defensive tackle. Indiana coach Bill Lynch and his staff saw potential.

"He came to our camp when he was in high school," Lynch explained of Mack. "He was heavy, but our coaches saw his explosiveness, his quick feet and his quick punch. He was definitely under the radar, he didn't have many (recruiting rating) stars, but we saw where he would fit in."

"He's transformed his body. He lost weight, then rebuilt his body to where he has the physical look of a Big Ten lineman."

At 6-foot-3 and 292 pounds, the redshirt sophomore is expected to play a prominent role in the Hoosiers' rotation on the defensive line. He played sparingly last season, but it was enough to cause shoulder problems.

Offseason surgery fixed the shoulder and kept him out of spring practice. Lynch dubbed Mack ready to go at full speed and compete for a starting job when IU opens camp in early August. **Loyal followers**

If it worked for Jesus, it probably would work for Michigan coach Rich Rodriguez.

The first-year Wolverine head coach brought with him from West Virginia the concept of having "apostles". In Rodriguez's world, apostles are players who have been selected by their peers to represent their opinions to the coaching staff. They aren't to be confused with captains, which will be chosen at the end of the season.

He said in the past he's had as few as eight. This year, there are 20 apostles on the Michigan team.

"You see these guys start to embrace the extra role," Rodriguez said. "It's something that gives each class a voice on the team."
