

FOR RELEASE
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CONTACT: Cody Bush
Phone: (931) 980-4940
e-mail: bushc@apsu.edu

Pioneer Football League Announces 2013 Major Award Winners

SAINT LOUIS, Mo. – San Diego quarterback Mason Mills, Marist defensive end Terrence Fede, Mercer quarterback John Russ, Stetson defensive back Donald Payne and Marist head coach Jim Parady were the recipients of the Pioneer Football League's top honors in a vote of the league's coaches.

Mills, a senior from Cornado, Calif., was named the league's Offensive Player of the Year after leading San Diego to an 8-3 overall record in 2013. He completed 66 percent (256-of-388) his passes for 3,463 yards and 35 touchdowns. Mills' 35 touchdown passes were third most in the FCS through the end of the regular season. He also was ranked among the nation's top 15 in passing efficiency (168.1, 5th), passing yards per game (314.8, 7th) and completion percentage (13th). Mills also was named one of 20 finalists for The Sports Network's Walter Payton Award. It is the sixth time a San Diego student-athlete has been named the league's Offensive Player of the Year, but Mills is the first to receive the honor since 2008 (John Mathews).

Fede, a redshirt senior from Nyack, N.Y., was picked the league's Defensive Player of the Year after leading Marist to a 7-1 PFL mark and a share of the program's first PFL title. He finished the season with 13.0 sacks, his 1.2 per game rate leading the FCS. In addition, Fede ranked fifth among FCS tackles with 1.6 tackles for loss per game, finishing the season with 18.0 stops behind the line of scrimmage. He had 59 total tackles during the campaign, four passes defended and unofficially was credited with 13 quarterback hurries. Fede was one of 20 finalists for The Sports Network's Buck Buchanan Award. He becomes the first Marist student-athlete to be recognized with one of the league's top honors.

Russ, a redshirt freshman from Buford, Ga., earned the league's Freshman Offensive Player of the Year honor after marshalling Mercer to a 6-2 third-place finish in PFL play. He completed 122-of-233 passes for 1,916 yards and 21 touchdowns but was a two-way threat behind center, carrying the ball 160 times for 903 net yards and another 12 touchdowns. Russ led all FCS freshmen in points responsible for with 17.2 points per game coming by his hand. Among FCS freshmen he ranked first in touchdown passes, fourth in total offense (234.9 ypg) and third in rushing touchdowns.

Payne, a redshirt freshman from Fayetteville, Ga., got the nod as the league's Freshman Defensive Player of the Year after leading Stetson in its return to the football gridiron. He began the 2013 campaign with a bang, earning the league's Defensive Player of the Week in three of the season's first four weeks and was named the National Freshman of the Week by The Sports Network in Week 1. Payne led Stetson and ranked 13th among FCS tacklers with 10.3 tackles per game (113 in 11 games). He also averaged 1.5 tackles for loss per game to finish 16th among FCS defenders in his rookie campaign. Payne also had 4.5 sacks, 13 passes defended, two fumbles forced and three fumbles recovered in 2013.

In his 22nd season as Marist head coach, Parady led the program to its first PFL title in its fifth season as a league member and was tapped by his fellow coaches as the league's Coach of the Year. The Red Foxes 7-1 PFL mark earned a share of the title and they finished with an 8-3 overall mark – a four-game improvement both in the league and overall from the 2012 season. It is Parady's first Coach of the Year citation since the program joined the PFL.

Butler and Marist each won a share of the 2013 PFL regular-season title. It was Butler's second-straight PFL crown and fourth overall. Marist won a share of its first-ever PFL title.

The announcement of the league's major award winners begins the league's awards week. The All-PFL squads will be released Tuesday followed by the Academic All-PFL teams, Wednesday.

2013 PFL AWARDS

Offensive Player of the Year: Mason Mills, San Diego
Defensive Player of the Year: Terrence Fede, Marist
Freshman Offensive Player of the Year: John Russ Mercer
Freshman Defensive Player of the Year: Donald Payne, Stetson
Coach of the Year: Jim Parady, Marist