

# BC quarterback among the best in the nation

By The Associated Press

He led the Big East Conference in touchdown passes, and didn't play for national champion Miami.

He claims he's as good as any quarterback in the country, but his name won't be found on many Heisman Trophy lists.

Meet Brian St. Pierre, Boston College's feisty quarterback poised for a breakout season that could turn the Eagles into one of the surprise teams of 2002.

"I think he'll be one of the top quarterbacks in the country," said Tom O'Brien, BC's usually reserved coach. "His decision-making improved each game last year, he has a fiery temperament, his team respects his ability and he runs faster than a lot of people think he does."

St. Pierre started last season with a sore muscle in his throwing arm, but came on strong and passed for 2,016 yards and 25 touchdowns — two more than Miami's Ken Dorsey.

Boston College capped an 8-4 season with a 20-16 win over Georgia in the Music City Bowl, a victory that ended BC's 22-game losing streak against Top 25 teams.

"That game will be a springboard the season," said St. Pierre, a 6-foot-4, 217-pound senior from Danvers, Mass. "We have confidence coming in, and I'm looking forward to bigger and better things."

Although picked to finish fourth in the Big East, the Eagles return 18 starters, including both kickers. Not among them, though, is All-American William Green, who ran for 1,559 yards and 15 TDs.

Less running and more passing? "I like that idea, but we'll see how it works out," said St. Pierre. "I'll do anything the coaches want so we can win."

BC's most memorable game last

season was an 18-7 loss to Miami on Nov. 20. With his team trailing 12-7 in the final minute, St. Pierre drove the Eagles 61 yards to the Hurricanes' 9. With 38 seconds left, his pass bounced off the knee of a Miami player and into the arms of another. A third Miami player took the ball and ran for the clinching touchdown.

St. Pierre can't forget. "It's always on my mind. It's the last thing I think about before I go to sleep," he said. "We were so close."

During games, St. Pierre is one worked-up QB. On the field, he yells in the huddle and waves his arms to direct teammates into position. On the sideline, he won't hesitate to give O'Brien a coaching tip or two.

"I'm not one of those quarterbacks that comes off and sits down and rests," said St. Pierre. "I'm on the sideline watching. I'd play defense and special teams if they'd let me. I probably get in coach O'Brien's ear too much during games, but that's just my nature."

**DRIVING SCHOOL:** Mopeds are out at Hawaii.

Citing injury risks, coach June Jones banned his players from riding the popular motor scooters.

"They're too dangerous," Jones said. "I wouldn't do this unless there was a problem. In the last few years, we've had a lot of moped accidents."

WR Mark Tate had knee surgery recently after a moped mishap, and is expected to miss the start of the season. Last year, QB Nick Rolovich, DTs Brett Clowers and Lui Fuga and DE Travis Laboy were injured in moped accidents.

Says LB Chris Brown: "We're tired after (morning) practice, and sometimes we're running late to class. The mopeds save a lot of time. We don't like the ban, but we understand why we need to have it. The whole thing is about safety."

Something Jones is well aware of. In February 2001, the coach was seriously injured when the car he was driving ran off the road and hit a concrete pillar.

**BOOK BIND:** A \$50 textbook cost

Florida a top linebacker and may help make Oklahoma's defense even better.

Juco transfer Lance Mitchell was enrolled at Florida in January when he learned he would be ineligible because the SEC wouldn't accept one of the English courses he took at City College of San Francisco.

None of this would have been a problem had he completed another English course he had enrolled in at the junior college. But he dropped that course because he couldn't afford the required \$50 textbook, and thought he already had enough English credits to be eligible at Florida.

The Gators released the 6-3, 240-pounder from his scholarship, and one of Mitchell's friends at Oklahoma told Sooners coaches about the development.

The Big 12 accepted the English course and Mitchell headed to OU.

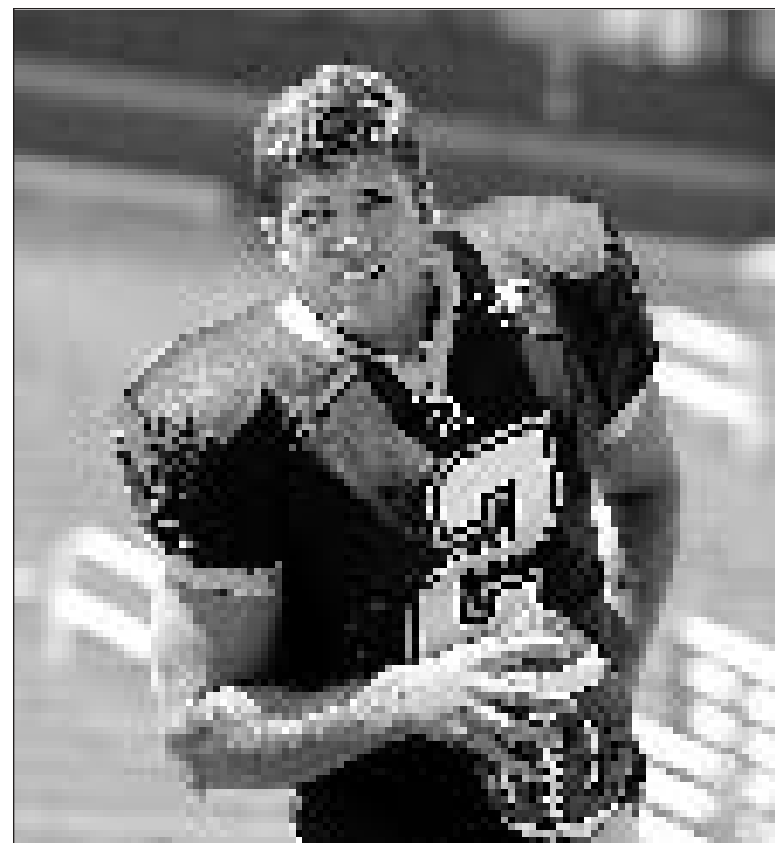
**TACKLING THE TACKLES:** Miami center Brett Romberg (6-3, 290) provided an impromptu scouting report on the tackles set to replace All-American Bryant McKinnie and Joaquin Gonzalez.

On Vernon Carey (listed at 6-5, 363 pounds), Romberg says: "He's 348 pounds of twisted steel and sex appeal. He lost about 20 pounds and is in the best shape of his life. He saw the big money Bryant McKinnie got and he's very, very eager to make some big money, too. So he's going to work his tail off to have a great year."

On Carlos Joseph (6-6, 334): "He's a young guy whose talent is pretty much immeasurable. He's got to protect Dorsey's back side and we'll see how that works. Carlos can throw his hands with the best of them, and he can kick just as well as anybody."

Thanks, coach.

**STREAKING:** Duke is an 0-12 season away from setting the record for the longest losing streak in Division I-A. The Blue Devils open with a 23-game losing streak — Northwestern holds the mark with 34 losses in a row from 1979-82.



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**Brian St. Pierre of Boston College led the Big East Conference in touchdown passes a year ago with 25.**

The second longest slide is 28 games, by Virginia from 1958-61 and Kansas State from 1945-48.

Duke's best chance to end the streak will come at Navy (0-10 in '01) on Sept. 28.

Defending national champion Miami opens with a 22-game winning streak, longest in the country. The last loss was Sept. 9, 2000, 34-29 to Washington.

**CASEY NEVER FORGETS:** Tennessee has "unfinished business" this season, and it doesn't involve beating Florida.

QB Casey Clausen is still seething over the Vols' 31-20 loss to LSU in the SEC title game. A win and Tennessee would have played Miami in the Rose Bowl for the national championship.

"Do myself and my team still remember that game? Yes," Clausen said. "Our motto for this year is unfinished business. We've got something to prove. To get to that point and not get it done, just talking about it sets a spark in me."

The fifth-ranked Vols better not look too far ahead. They may play nine of

their 12 games in state, but visitors include No. 6 Florida on Sept. 21 and No. 1 Miami on Nov. 9. There's also a visit to No. 8 Georgia on Oct. 12.

Nonetheless, an SEC title is expected this season.

"We've got a lot of high expectations at our place," coach Phillip Fulmer said. "That doesn't change."

**EXTRA POINTS:** Last year, Louisville's John L. Smith ran with the bulls in Pamplona. This summer, the 53-year-old coach went skydiving, bailing out of a plane from 11,000 feet over southern Indiana ... K.C. Keeler replaces Tubby Raymond at Delaware. The 76-year-old Raymond retired after 36 seasons with a 300-119-3 record and three Division II titles — in 1971, '72 and '79. ... Notre Dame QBs threw four TD passes in '01, fewest of any of the 117 I-A teams ... Colorado State has only five home games in a 13-game schedule ... Washington allowed 112 points in the last two games of '01 — 65 to Miami and 47 to Texas ... New Vanderbilt coach Bobby Johnson will try to avoid a 20th straight losing season at the school.

# College football teams seeking perfection

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running back Cedric Benson and wide receivers Roy Williams and B.J. Johnson, Texas won't have problems scoring. All the 'Horns need to do is beat Oklahoma on Oct. 12, and they'll be in the title hunt.

"The program is walking with a swagger again," coach Mack Brown says. "We feel like we should be a Top 5 team and now we're at the point that if we do our jobs, there may come a time when the ball bounces right and we could win a national championship."

At Tennessee, the pass-catch combo of Casey Clausen to Kelley Washington has the VolNation thinking SEC title, especially with nine

games in state. Two big games are home — against Florida and Miami.

The Vols' motto this season: "Unfinished business." The reason? A 31-20 loss to LSU in the SEC title game. "We've got something to prove," Clausen says. "To get to that point and not get it done, just talking about it sets a spark in me."

At The Swamp, Florida hopes to maintain the glory days under Steve Spurrier, who abruptly left for the Washington Redskins. Former Gators assistant Ron Zook takes over. And no matter how much he talks, travels and tries to outwork Spurrier, the Zooker knows the score.

"It obviously comes down to wins

or losses," he says. "It makes no difference what people say now."

At least he has Heisman runner-up Rex Grossman back. The junior led the nation in passing — 3,896 yards and 34 TDs. Grossman toyed with transferring after Spurrier left.

"It was a difficult decision," Grossman says, "But as soon as I got all the facts, it was pretty easy. I still wanted to be a Gator."

Looking for surprise teams? Try Georgia Tech in the ACC, Boston College in the Big East, Michigan State in the Big Ten, Texas A&M in the Big 12, Arizona in the Pac-10 and Georgia in the SEC.

This could be a strong year for quarterbacks. In addition to Dorsey,

Simms, Rix, Clausen and Grossman, there's no less than a dozen other big guns out there, including Washington State's Jason Gesser, Marshall's Byron Leftwich, Louisville's Dave Ragone, Mississippi's Eli Manning, Louisiana Tech's Luke McCown and Boise State's Ryan Dinwiddie.

Look West for the best running back in the country — Oregon's Onterio Smith, who topped 1,000 yards last season in the Ducks' 11-1 season. Other top runners include Texas' Benson, Wisconsin's Anthony Davis, LSU's LaBrandon Toefield, Virginia Tech's duo of Lee Suggs and Kevin Jones and Colorado's trio of Chris Brown, Bobby Purify and Marcus Houston.

As for games, there's a few you don't want to miss: Miami at Florida on Sept. 7; Texas vs. Oklahoma in Dallas and Florida State at Miami on Oct. 12; and Miami at Tennessee on Nov. 9.

Pac-10 rivals Cal and Stanford both have new coaches — Jeff Tedford at Cal, Buddy Teevens at Stanford.

Other schools with new coaches include Indiana (Gerry DiNardo), Kansas (Mark Mangino), Navy (Paul Johnson) and Vanderbilt (Bobby Johnson).

Miami opens the season with I-A's longest winning streak at 22 games; Duke has the longest losing streak at 23 games.