

## UT Defensive End Brian Orakpo Wins 2008 Rotary Lombardi Award

### UT Defensive End Brian Orakpo Named 2008 Rotary Lombardi Award Winner

One of Brian Orakpo's dreams came true tonight when he was named the winner of the 39th annual Rotary Lombardi Award, presented by Wachovia. Although Orakpo was the 13th finalist from The University of Texas in award history, it has been 24 years since Tony DeGrate took home the award in 1984. Kenneth Sims won the award for Texas in 1981, making Orakpo the third winner from UT. Both Sims and DeGrate were in attendance at tonight's ceremony at the Hilton Americas Hotel in downtown Houston.

The 6-foot-4, 260-pound senior defensive end, whom teammates have dubbed "O-sack-po," is sixth in the nation with 10 1/2 sacks and is expected to be a first round NFL draft pick. He had 18 tackles for a loss and has forced four fumbles this season. In the game against Oklahoma, Orakpo had two sacks, four tackles for a loss and a forced fumble.

The native Houstonian played both football and basketball at Lamar High School, ultimately deciding to concentrate on football when it came time for college. Orakpo was named the AP Big 12 Defensive Player of the Year on December 3. He took home the Bronko Nagurski Trophy, honoring the nation's top defensive player on Sunday, December 7, one day after receiving his college degree in youth and community studies from The University of Texas.

When asked prior to the award ceremony what winning the Rotary Lombardi Award for UT and himself would mean, Orakpo said, "It would be an honor. Just being a finalist is amazing, but also winning would be amazing because these are the types of things you dream of. You come to the university, you write all kinds of goals you want to accomplish and dreams that you never really realize how much of it can come true by the time it's all said and done. Now I'm a finalist for the Lombardi Award. It's a dream come true."

The other finalists for the award were: Ohio State senior linebacker James Laurinaitis, who returned as a finalist after being chosen as the only junior among the final four for the 38th Rotary Lombardi Award; USC senior linebacker Rey Maulauga, who was named to the All-Pac-10 first team for the third consecutive year; and Alabama's left tackle, Andre Smith, the lone junior and offensive player among this year's finalists.

Founded in the weeks following the 1970 death from cancer of legendary football coach Vince Lombardi, the Rotary Lombardi Award has consistently delivered upon the mission set forth by Marie Lombardi when she granted the use of her late husband's name. Her only stipulation was that all net proceeds from the event be donated to the American Cancer Society. Millions of dollars have been raised since that time.

For more information, visit [www.rotarylombardiaward.org](http://www.rotarylombardiaward.org).

The Rotary Club of Houston, in operation since 1912, is an association of more than 350 successful business professionals, all prominent in their individual fields of endeavor, who volunteer their efforts through the work of some two dozen club committees. Assistance is provided to such diverse groups as troubled youngsters, former prison inmates, business oriented high school students, families of cancer patients, deserving college scholarship candidates and the nation's cancer research efforts. The club's most recent community project is the East End Healthy Children's Collaborative which provides much needed access to primary health care for residents on Houston's East side.

