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**Big Ten Running Backs Ameer Abdullah, Tevin Coleman and Melvin Gordon
Named 2014 Doak Walker Award Finalists**

DALLAS – The PwC SMU Athletic Forum today announced **Ameer Abdullah** of Nebraska, **Tevin Coleman** of Indiana, and **Melvin Gordon** of Wisconsin as the three finalists for the 2014 Doak Walker Award. The finalists were determined by a vote of the Doak Walker Award National Selection Committee.

The Committee will cast a second ballot, due on the Monday following Championship Saturday, to determine the recipient of the 2014 Doak Walker Award. The recipient will be announced on ESPN during *The Home Depot College Football Awards* airing live from the Atlantic Dance Hall at Disney's BoardWalk at the Walt Disney World Resort on Thursday, December 11, at 7 p.m. (ET). The award will be presented at the 2014 Doak Walker Award Presentation Banquet in Dallas on Friday, February 27, 2015.

Abdullah, a senior from Homewood, Alabama, has totaled 1,417 yards and ranks 10th nationally in total rushing yards and rushing yards per game despite missing nearly all of one game with an injury. His 18 rushing touchdowns are the sixth-most in the nation. Abdullah was a 2013 Doak Walker Award semifinalist and has eclipsed 200 yards four times this season.

Coleman, a junior from Tinley Park, Illinois, is second nationally in total rushing yards and rushing yards per game with 1,906 and 173.3, respectively. He also has scored 15 touchdowns on the ground and broke Indiana's single-season rushing record with a 228-yard performance in his 11th game of the season. Coleman has rushed for more than 200 yards four times in 2014 and surpassed 300 yards on one occasion.

Gordon, a junior from Kenosha, Wisconsin, leads the nation in total rushing yards (2,109), rushing yards per game (191.7) and rushing touchdowns (25). His 408 yards rushing in week 12 broke

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2000 Doak Walker Award recipient LaDainian Tomlinson's 15-year-old NCAA record for rushing yards in a game. A 2013 Doak Walker Award semifinalist, Gordon also has four other games with more than 200 yards in 2014.

With their selection, it marks the first time in the 25-year history of the Doak Walker Award that all three finalists represent the same conference. A running back from the Big Ten has been named the Doak Walker Award recipient six previous times.

The three Doak Walker Award finalists will be highlighted on ESPNU during *The Home Depot College Football Awards Nomination Special* airing Tuesday, November 25, at 6 p.m. (ET). The 30-minute program will be hosted by Brendan Fitzgerald and include analysis from Kevin Carter.

In addition to outstanding performance on the field, candidates for the Doak Walker Award must have demonstrated records of leadership and exhibited the characteristics of sportsmanship and fair play associated with Doak Walker.

Now in its 25th year, the award is named after three-time SMU All-America running back and 1948 Heisman Trophy winner Doak Walker. The versatile Walker, who also punted, returned kicks and kicked extra points, led the Mustangs to two Southwest Conference Championships and brought the school into the national spotlight. Walker was drafted by the Detroit Lions and as a rookie led the league in scoring. During his six years with the Lions, he led the team to two NFL championships and was chosen All-Pro four times. Walker is a member of both the College and Pro Football Halls of Fame.

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Honoring the legends of sports for 25 years, the PwC SMU Athletic Forum celebrates outstanding success in athletics. Based in Dallas, the series features major figures from a variety of sports. The PwC SMU Athletic Forum includes four luncheons and the prestigious Doak Walker Award Presentation Banquet.

The Doak Walker Award is a member of the National College Football Awards Association (NCFAA) which encompasses the most prestigious awards in college football. The 21 awards boast 678 years of tradition-selection excellence. Visit www.NCFAA.org to learn more about our story.

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