

2015 FRED MITCHELL AWARD PRESENTED TO ST. AMBROSE UNIVERSITY'S MATT COTIGUALA



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December 15, 2015 – St. Ambrose University senior place-kicker Matt Cotiguala (Orland Park, IL) is the recipient of the 2015 Fred Mitchell Award. The Award is provided to the nation's top place-kicker in FCS, Division II, Division III, NAIA and NJCAA for excellence on the football field and in the community. Over 750 place-kickers are eligible.

The Award is named for Fred Mitchell, the All-American place-kicker from Wittenberg University and sports columnist for the *Chicago Tribune* for 41 years. Mitchell said, "It is a thrill to congratulate Matt as the first NAIA kicker to receive the Fred Mitchell Award since 2011 and the first-ever kicker from a school in Iowa. With more than 750 place-kickers to choose from, we are extremely proud to recognize Matt among a stellar group of nominees. Matt was at or near the top of the 750 eligible kickers in many statistical categories. Matt's record-setting season and collegiate career were extremely impressive. It was a genuine pleasure for me to be the first to inform Matt that he is the 2015 FMA winner, and I could sense the sincere pride he places on receiving the Award."

Cotiguala's season statistics are provided below.

| FGM | FGA | FG% | 1-19 | 20-29 | 30-39 | 40-49 | 50+ | LONG | PATM | PATA | PTS |
|-----|-----|-----|------|-------|-------|-------|-----|------|------|------|-----|
| 23 | 25 | 92% | 0-0 | 9-9 | 8-9 | 5-5 | 1-2 | 50 | 28 | 28 | 97 |

"It is a tremendous honor to be selected for the Fred Mitchell Award," Cotiguala said. "The Award validates the incredible focus and hard work not only shown by myself but the entire St. Ambrose football team this season. I am proud to have brought this award to the St. Ambrose family."

Cotiguala is very active in civic and community service endeavors. He volunteers with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security assisting agents in a variety of projects and he volunteers for a Congressman near his hometown to assist congressional aides. Cotiguala has actively assisted veterans, volunteered for the Special Olympics, served in area soup kitchens and helped develop local high school kickers.

St. Ambrose head coach Mike Magistrelli added, "This is a tremendous and well-deserved honor for Matt. Nobody works harder on and off the field than he does. His discipline and dedication are what allow Matt to not only excel on the field but also in the classroom and the community."

The Award's Selection Committee Chairman, Chris Kearney, said, "There were dozens of terrific candidates for this Award. In fact, 32 place-kickers were nominated by their schools for consideration. We are looking forward to honoring Matt on February 15, 2016 during the National Football Foundation Chicago Metro Chapter Awards Ceremony." Details for the Awards Ceremony are at www.nffchicagoawards.eventbrite.com.

ABOUT THE FRED MITCHELL AWARD

A blue-ribbon Selection Committee (listed at www.fredmitchellaward.com) evaluates place-kickers that are nominated by their schools. Members of the Pro and/or College Football Hall of Fame on the Selection Committee include Tom Beck, Kevin Butler, Paul Hornung, Marv Levy, Steve McMichael, Don Pierson and Gale Sayers. Former football players and others that are active in their communities are also on the Selection Committee including Carl Allegretti, Sergio Castillo, Sean Gothier, Teddy Greenstein, Randy Helt, Michael Husted, Dan Jiggetts, Rick Kolaczewski, Connie Kowal, Greg Loberg, Tom Lynch, Carol Monroe, Jeff Michalczyk, Mark Murphy, Patrick Murray, Tom Obarski, Rob Perry, Michael Ritchey, Jeff Schebler, Caroline Schrenker, Bob Thomas, Wolfe Tone, Todd Wilkins, Gary Zauner and Rob Zvonar. There are 14 former college or NFL place-kickers on the Selection Committee, including Schebler (the inaugural Fred Mitchell Award recipient in 2009 and the highest-scoring place-kicker in NCAA history at any level), Lynch (two-time recipient of the Award and the kicker on the 2011 NAIA National Champion Saint Xavier University Cougars), Murray (whose 25 FG's in 2012 were just one shy of the all-time FCS record set by Nevada's Tony Zendejas), Castillo (the first Division II kicker to win the Award and who made 62 of 79 career field goals and 251 of 255 extra points) and Obarski (with a record-setting career at Concordia – St. Paul including 44 career field goals).