Nevada’s first finalist for “Academic Heisman”

On the football field during the fall, you’ll recognize Jordan Dobrich as the physical and fearless middle linebacker for the Nevada football team, a player with equal parts strength, speed and guile who leads the Wolf Pack’s defense.

In the locker room, Dobrich is the consummate team leader, a team captain for an unprecedented third time during his senior season, and a man so devoted to his football program and University that a Wolf Pack tattoo adorns his left arm.

Those are the sides of Dobrich that most see, and those slivers of the 23-year-old Magalia, Calif., native are worthy of respect and applause.

Andrew Caudill sees another side of Dobrich every day on campus. An academic advisor for the Wolf Pack athletics department, Caudill sees excellence from Dobrich. He sees the 3.85 grade-point average in mechanical engineering, the academic chair of Theta Tau (a professional engineering fraternity), the National Society of Leadership member, and the Golden Key Scholar.

“Jordan is the most accomplished football student-athlete I have ever been around,” Caudill said. “For him to balance football with being in the top 10 percent of his class in mechanical engineering is truly amazing. That alone is telling of the work ethic and character Jordan displays, which will lead him down the path to greatness in his life. Jordan is well-respected among his peers on campus, on his team, and in the community.”

Dobrich’s accomplishments were rewarded in November with his selection as a member of the 2015 National Football Foundation National Scholar-Athlete Class. In addition to earning an $18,000 postgraduate scholarship, Dobrich was also a finalist for the 2015 William V. Campbell Trophy.

The award is often called the “Academic Heisman,” and selection is limited to just 12 players across all divisions of college football. How rare is the honor? Dobrich is the first in
Jordan Dobrich was the first three-year captain in modern history for the Wolf Pack football team. He was second on the team in tackles this year and led Nevada to its 10th bowl game appearance in the last 11 years.

University of Nevada, Reno history to earn it, and just the fifth in the history of the Mountain West Conference.

“Jordan embodies everything we want this program to stand for – leadership and excellence in the classroom as well as on the field. This award is an incredible recognition of his hard work and dedication,” said Brian Polian, Nevada’s head football coach.

The path has been a winding one for Dobrich. He did not come to Nevada as a ballyhooed recruit with four or five stars from the football recruiting services. Dobrich was under-recruited and had no scholarship offers for football from any school. From the outside looking in, he admired the University of Nevada for the academic opportunities it presented. The football coaching staff at Nevada noticed his potential on the field and appreciated his academic background, so he was offered a chance to walk on to the football program. It took less than a year for the Wolf Pack staff to realize Dobrich’s full potential and offer him a scholarship.

After graduation, Dobrich hopes to pursue postgraduate studies in either petroleum engineering or mechanical engineering.

“Being selected as a finalist for the William V. Campbell Trophy is an honor for which I am extraordinarily grateful,” Dobrich said.

Wolf Pack achieves third-highest graduation rate

University of Nevada, Reno student-athletes continue to achieve success as the Wolf Pack’s Graduation Success Rate was the third highest score in the history of the program at 79 percent, according to data released by the NCAA this fall.

“At our core is our unwavering support of the educational mission of our great University, and we’re proud of the achievement shown by our student-athletes,” said Athletics Director Doug Knuth. “We’re thankful for the commitment and focus on education and academic achievement shown by our coaches and staff.”

This is the eleventh year the NCAA has calculated data for the Graduation Success Rate (GSR), and the Wolf Pack’s rate has risen eight times in that span. The Wolf Pack’s first score was 62 percent in 2005 and the GSR has hit a high-water mark of 80 percent twice in the history of the program. Overall, Nevada has seen nearly 700 of its student-athletes graduate in the past 10 years.