NEW YORK – Manti Te’o didn’t grab Notre Dame’s eighth Heisman Trophy here on Saturday night, but his eyes remain on the biggest prize, next month’s BCS National Championship Game against Alabama.

Te’o was aiming to become the first true defensive player to win the coveted trophy, but instead, Texas A&M quarterback Johnny Manziel became the first freshman to take home the honor.

The announcement came as no real surprise as the redshirt freshman Aggie signal-caller had been considered a frontrunner for the 78th annual award since his performance in a win over Alabama on Nov. 10th. Manziel became the clear favorite a week later, when Kansas State and Collin Klein were upset by Baylor. Klein was also invited to the ceremony.

Manziel won with 474 first-place votes and 2,029 total points. Te'o finished second with 321 first-place votes and 1,706 total points. Te'o managed to grab the most total points of any pure defensive player in Heisman history.

Klein came in third, garnering 60 first-place votes and 894 total points. USC wide receiver Marqise Lee and Ohio State quarterback Braxton Miller rounded out the top five with 207 and 144 total points, respectively,

Te’o will return to South Bend without the most prestigious national award, but he will be bringing home six national honors, including the Maxwell, Camp awards for the nation’s best player and the Bednarik Award as the country’s best defensive player. The six major awards are the most of any college football player in a single season.

In leading the Irish to a perfect 12-0 regular season and a trip to the BCS National Championship Game on Jan. 7th, Te’o recorded 101 tackles, including 46 solos, along with a school-record seven interceptions. He was the clear leader of not only the defense, but the entire Notre Dame team and proved it by playing through pain after losing his grandmother and girlfriend within hours of each other in September.

The Irish remain in a tie with Ohio State for the most Heisman Trophies, although the Buckeyes only have six winners, with Archie Griffin winning the award twice. USC had seven until Reggie Bush’s was stripped away.

Te’o admittedly wanted to win the award, although he said he was more excited than nervous and was happy to know that – win or lose - everybody back home was watching.

Now he’ll get the chance to return to South Bend and turn his focus to the Crimson Tide.

“My mind is all on the national championship and winning that,” Te’o said prior to the announcement, adding that he got his first chance to take a nap on Saturday afternoon.

“I can’t wait. I just want to get with my team and see my guys again.”

Te’o found the time to work out almost every day and also the discipline to lay off some of the food offered during his travels to award banquets across the country, but didn’t have much time to break down the Crimson Tide.

“I haven’t seen any Alabama film yet, they haunt my dreams though,” Te’o said. “'Bama does

what they do and they do it well. There are no surprises with ‘Bama. They’re going to run the ball and then they’re going to throw deep passes.

“They have a quarterback who is very accurate. And you don’t have to talk about their defense, their defense speaks for themselves.”

Te’o will get the chance to do his talking in South Beach in one month.