

HEAVY METAL: THE NCFAA NEWSLETTER (DEC. 4, 2020)

Bednarik Award – nation’s defensive player of the year. Semifinalists named Mon., Dec. 7; finalists named Tues., Dec. 22

The Bednarik Player of the Week went to Washington outside linebacker **Zion Tupuola-Fetui** (#58, So., Pearl City, Hawai'i). Tupuola-Fetui closed an outstanding November with 3.0 sacks, forced a fumble and had a fumble recovery as the Huskies rallied from a 21-0 deficit for a 24-21 win over Utah. He added six total tackles and returned the fumble 29 yards. After posting two sacks in Washington's first two games he now leads the nation at 2.33 sacks per game and is second nationally in forced fumbles with 1.0 per game. His seven sacks are one short of the highest total any Husky has had for a full season since 2014 and he leads the Pac-12 in tackles-for-loss with the same 2.33 average.

Biletnikoff Award – nation’s outstanding receiver regardless of position. Semifinalists named Mon., Dec. 7; finalists named Tues., Dec. 22

The Tallahassee Quarterback Club Foundation named seven additions to its Watch List earlier this week prior to naming its semifinalists on Monday. **Treyton Burks** (#16, So., Warren, Ark.) of Arkansas had 31 receptions in his last five games for 486 yards and five TD's and eclipsed the 1,000 career receiving yards mark Nov. 21 against LSU, his 18th career game. WR **D'Wayne Eskridge** of Western Michigan (#1, Sr., Bluffton, Ind.) is second nationally in receiving, averaging 147.8 yards per game. He scored TD's in four consecutive games last month and caught a season-high seven passes for 134 yards last week against NIU, on the heels of a four-catch, three-TD, 212-yard day against Central Michigan. WR **Erik Ezukanma** of Texas Tech (#13, So., Fort Worth, Texas) is second among the Big 12's receivers with 728 yards off 44 receptions and six TD's. He caught seven pass for a career-high 183 yards last week against Oklahoma State. Last week against Boston College, Louisville WR **Dez Fitzpatrick** (#7, Sr., Farmington Hills, Mich.) had eight catches for a career-high 182 yards, his eighth 100-yard day for the Cardinals, and moved into sixth on the U of L's career receiving mark with 2,512 receiving yards. He is fourth in the ACC at 75.8 ypg. WR **Jaivon Heiligh** (#6, Jr., Venice, Fla.) leads Coastal Carolina in receptions (41), yards (682) and TD's (eight) and is fourth in the Sun Belt at 75.8 ypg. His eight TD's are ninth nationally and his career-high of 108 yards came Oct. 14 at No. 21 Louisiana. WR **Sam Pinckney** of Georgia State (#15, So., Greenwood, S.C.) is third in the Sun Belt at 83.7 ypg and finished the Pathers' regular season with 10-catch, 126-yard game in a 30-24 win over rival Georgia Southern. WR **Rashee Rice** (#11, So., North Richland Hills, Texas) became SMU's third Watch List member, joining Kylan Granson and Reggie Roberson Jr. Rice is SMU's receiving leader with 48 catches for 683 yards and five TD's and is fifth in The American with 68.3 ypg.

The TQCF continues is 2020 FanVote at biletnikoffaward.com/fan-vote. The aggregate fan tally will be counted as one official vote to determine semifinalists (10), finalists (three) and the winner.

Bronko Nagurski Trophy – nation’s top defensive player. Finalists named Wed., Dec. 9; winner named Tues., Dec. 22

The FWAA honored Colorado LB **Nate Landman** (#53, Sr., Danville, Calif.) as its National Defensive Player of the Week. Landman had 10 solos among his 11 total tackles and had four TFL's in a 20-10 win over San Diego State in which the Buffaloes kept the Aztecs to 100 yards below their average total offense output and out of the red zone. He had three sacks, becoming just the third player in the last 10 years at CU to have three in a game. Landman was Colorado's leading tackler the past two seasons and its current leader with 37. He was credited with a touchdown save and his three sacks and the pass break-up all came on third down that stopped Aztec drives. The Aztecs ran 18 plays in CU territory and gained just 22 yards. Landman has 314 career tackles, 14th place all-time at Colorado.

Burlsworth Trophy – most outstanding player who started his career as a walk-on. Semifinalists named Tues., Dec. 15; finalists named Tues., Dec. 22; winner named Mon., Jan. 4, 2021.

The nomination period for the 2020 Burlsworth Trophy is now closed. The selection committee will announce its nominees on Tues., Dec. 8, then pairing them down to 10 semifinalists for a Dec. 15 announcement, and then three finalists by Dec. 22. The finalists will take part in the virtual Burlsworth Trophy award ceremony on Jan. 4, 2021.

Butkus Award – nation’s best linebacker. Finalists named Mon., Dec. 14

The Butkus Award revealed its 16 semifinalists for its 36th annual award last Monday, eight of which hail from SEC schools, three from the ACC and two from the Big Ten and Pac-12. The semifinalists are: **Nick Bolton** of Missouri, currently third in the SEC at 10.9 tackles per game and sixth at 1.07 TFL's per game; **Zaven Collins** of Tulsa, who is tied for third in The American at 8.0 tpg and tied for fourth nationally with four interceptions; **Jabril Cox** of LSU, who has 36 tackles and two interceptions this season; **Nakobe Dean** of Georgia, who leads the Bulldogs with 61 tackles and has surged of late with 15, 14 and 12 tackles his past three games; **Olakunle Fatukasi** of Rutgers leads the Big Ten in tackles with 75 and has nine tackles for a loss, good for second in the conference. He is fifth in the nation with 12.5 tackles per game and has added 2.0 sacks; **Christian Harris** of Alabama, the Tide's tackles leader with 57 and also with 4.5 TFL's; **Buddy Johnson** of Texas A&M, tied for eighth in the SEC at 9.4 tpg; **Ernest Jones** of South Carolina, seventh in the SEC at 9.6 tpg and ninth nationally in total tackles with 86; **Nate Landman** of Colorado, whose 37 tackles leads the Buffaloes

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and is fourth in the Pac-12 with 10.3 per game; **Devin Lloyd** of Utah, tied for second in the Pac-12 at 11.0 tpg; **Grant Morgan** of Arkansas, currently the nation's tackles leader with 104 and 13.0 per game with four games of 15-plus tackles this season; **Jeremiah Owusu-Koramoah** of Notre Dame, who has 8.5 TFL's and is the Irish's second-leading tackler with 44; **Monty Rice** of Georgia, the Bulldogs' second-leading tackler with 42; **Charles Snowden** of Virginia; the Cavs' fourth-leading tackler with 44 and in the nation's top-25 with 10.0 TFL's; **Chazz Surratt** of North Carolina, the team's sacks leader with 6.0 and sixth in the ACC in tackles at 8.3 tpg; and **Pete Werner** of Ohio State, the Buckeyes' second-leading tackler with 25.

Davey O'Brien Award – nation's best quarterback. Semifinalists named Mon., Dec. 7; finalists named Tues., Dec. 22

The Davey O'Brien Foundation announced 35 quarterbacks to its Class of 2020. Each member of the group is now an official candidate to win the 2020 Davey O'Brien National Quarterback Award. A point-scoring model was used to determine the quarterbacks in the Class of 2020. Points were awarded to players based on their overall performance as well as inclusion on the Davey O'Brien Preseason Watch List, weekly Great 8 lists and National Quarterback of the Week winners. The Class of 2020 consists of players from all 10 FBS conferences as well as football independents – the ACC has the most honorees with seven, followed by the SEC and AAC with five. The list includes 13 seniors, nine juniors, nine sophomores and four freshmen. The Davey O'Brien Fan Vote will run through Sun., Dec. 6.

The quarterbacks on this week's Great 8 list included Notre Dame's **Ian Book**, **Matt Corral** of Ole Miss, UCF's **Dillon Gabriel**, **Frank Harris** of UTSA, Alabama's **Mac Jones**, **Trevor Lawrence** of Clemson, Louisiana's **Levi Lewis** and **Brock Purdy** of Iowa State.

In all, 53 different quarterbacks received the weekly accolade in 2020. The 35 semifinalists can be found at daveyobrienaward.org.

Disney Spirit Award – college football's most inspirational player.

There's talk that Clemson RB running back **Darien Rencher** will one day be the Atlantic Coast Conference commissioner. Or maybe the Governor of South Carolina. Perhaps, but for now this much is certain: Rencher will be the recipient of the 2020 Disney Spirit Award for his inspiring leadership amid college football's push to overcome social injustice and the coronavirus pandemic.

Rencher was one of the early voices in the effort among college football players nationwide to promote safe play during the 2020 season amid the pandemic. Working with some of the college game's biggest stars, such as Ohio State QB Justin Fields, Oklahoma State RB Chuba Hubbard and Clemson teammate Trevor Lawrence, Rencher sparked the national #WeWantToPlay movement among college football players who were eager to find ways for teams to safely play this season.

And it was Rencher who was a key organizer of a peaceful campus march by the football program in support of social justice. He continues to be a powerful voice within the movement both at Clemson and back home in nearby Anderson, S.C.

Rencher will be presented with the coveted award by Disney Sports Vice President Faron Kelley at *The Home Depot College Football Awards* on Jan. 7, 2021.

Doak Walker Award – nation's premier running back. Semifinalists named Mon., Dec. 7; finalists named Tues., Dec. 22

We won't get to see Buffalo RB **Jaret Patterson** this weekend as the Bulls' game at Ohio has been canceled, so we'll have to wait another week to see if Patterson (#26, Jr., Glendale, Md.) can get over the 1,000-yard mark in his fifth game of a season. Patterson is 80 yards shy of 1,000 and if he tops 1,000 on Dec. 12 against Akron, he'll be the 12th player in FBS history to reach it in five games. The nation's rushing leader by average at 230 yards per game ran for 409 yards last week against Kent State, the second-most yards in FBS history, and tied the FBS record with eight rushing TD's. In the last two games Patterson has rushed for 710 yards, setting an FBS record for most yards in consecutive games. In four games his 16 rushing TD's are second nationally and are tied for second in school history for a single season. Over the last 10 games Patterson has rushed for 2,033 yards and 31 TD's.

Heisman Trophy – nation's most outstanding player. Finalists named Thurs., Dec. 24.

Last week marked the return of Clemson QB **Trevor Lawrence** (#16, Jr., Cartersville, Ga.) following a five-week hiatus due to COVID concerns and a game postponement. Lawrence torched Pitt for 403 yards on 26-of-37 passing with two TD's and without an interception. He is now 32-1 as a starter and can set the school's career wins by a starting QB record this weekend as the Tigers head into an interesting game at Virginia Tech. His .970 winning percentage is the best by an FBS QB with at least 30 starts since the Division I split in 1978.

UCF beat I-4 rival USF 58-46 last week in what was the final regular-season game for UCF QB **Dillon Gabriel** (#11, So., Mililani, Hawaii). The senior threw a TD pass for a 22nd straight game to tie Daunte Culpepper for the third-longest streak in school history and finished 22-of-36 passing for 336 yards with four TD's and a rushing TD. He finishes the abbreviated regular season with 30 passing TD's, third-most in a single season in UCF history, which pushed his career total to 59. It was the 11th 300-yard passing day of his career

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and he now has 7,006 career passing yards, sixth all-time at UCF.

John Mackey Award – nation's most outstanding tight end. Semifinalists named Mon., Dec. 7; finalists named Tues., Dec. 22

The John Mackey Award named Washington TE **Cade Otten** (#87, Jr., Tumwatre, Wash.) as its Tight End of the Week. Otten was crucial to the Huskies' 21-point comeback against Utah in a 24-21 win, finishing with eight catches for 108 yards and two TD's, including the final score that became the game-winner. Honorable mention for the week went to Kyle Pitts of Florida (5-99 yds., 3 TDs) and Charlie Kolar of Iowa State (6-131 yds.)

Lou Groza Award – nation's top placekicker. Semifinalists named Mon., Dec. 7; finalists named Tues., Dec. 22

The Palm Beach County Sports Commission recognized three kickers as its Stars of the Week. **Keith Duncan** of Iowa, a 2019 Lou Groza Award finalist, booted four field goals, including a pair in the fourth quarter that gave the Hawkeyes a 26-20 win over Nebraska. Duncan (#3, Sr., Weddington, N.C.) had makes of 48, 37, 33 and 32 yards to move into the top-five in the Hawkeye record books for career field goals with 48. He had a 14-point game to top all FBS kickers this week and has a team-leading 51 points this season. His 14-point game was the best by an FBS kicker this week. For the season, Duncan is 10-for-14 on field goals and 21-for-21 on PATs to lead Iowa with 51 points.

Michigan State K **Matt Coghlin** (#4, Sr., Cincinnati, Ohio) nailed a 48-yard field goal with 2:47 left to hand the Spartans a 23-20 lead on the way to a 29-20 win over Northwestern. Besides the game winner, Coghlin also hit from 44 and 22 yards for his third multi-FG game of the season to bring his season scoring total to 30 points to lead MSU.

Georgia State graduate transfer K **Noel Ruiz** helped seal a 30-24 win over Georgia Southern with a 35-yard FG with under two minutes to play. In the first half, Ruiz (#92, Sr., Wilson, N.C.) had another 35-yarder and a make from 29 yards. Ruiz is 11-for-14 on field goals and 30-for-31 on PATs for a team-leading 53 points.

Maxwell Award – nation's player of the year. Semifinalists named Mon., Dec. 7; finalists names Tues., Dec. 22

Jaret Patterson did in an afternoon what most backs are fortunate to do in a month of action. In the greatest individual performance in school history, the big-play Bulls RB erupted for 409 rushing yards and an NCAA record-tying eight TD's earning himself Maxwell Award Player of the Week honors. Patterson joined Texas' Ricky Williams as the only players to rush for 300 yards in back-to-back games, as Buffalo blasted Kent State in a battle of unbeaten, 70-41.

The Board of the Maxwell Football Club also determined, with regret, that the 84th Maxwell Awards Gala which was to be held on March 12, 2021, will be indefinitely postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The MFC Board will meet again in January to determine the feasibility of conducting the Gala or a similar event at a later date in 2021.

Outland Trophy – nation's most outstanding interior lineman. Semifinalists named Mon., Dec. 7; finalists named Tues., Dec. 22.

Left tackle **Brady Christiansen** (#67, Jr., Bountiful, Utah) and BYU added one more game to the slate earlier this week and face Coastal Carolina on Saturday. It will be a prime matchup for Christiansen, one of the nation's top tackles, and the Cougars' offense that is second in the nation in plays of 30 yards or more with 34. Big plays have been a big part of BYU's success – blocking up front has allowed Zach Wilson to amass a 205.3 QB rating, third nationally, and the Cougars have 175 plays of 10 or more yards this season. BYU has scored 40 points in eight its first nine games for the first time in its history.

Paul Hornung Award – most versatile player in college football. Semifinalists named Mon., Dec. 7; finalists named Tues., Dec. 22

Six offensive players and return specialists who led their teams to wins last week make up this week's Paul Hornung Award Honor Roll.

Western Michigan WR/RS **D'Wayne Eskridge** (#1, Sr., Bluffton, Ind.) touched the ball 11 times three different ways for 285 yards and a TD in a 30-27 win over NIU. Eskridge caught seven passes for 134 yards, carried once for 27 yards and returned three kickoffs for 124 yards, including a 100-yard TD. He accounted for six first downs, two that came in the game-winning field goal drive. Oregon State RB/ST **Jermar Jefferson** (#6, Jr., Harbor City, Calif.) was a workhorse in a 41-38 upset over Oregon, with 32 touches for 249 all-purpose yards and two TD's. Jefferson carried 29 times for 226 yards and two TD's with an 82-yard run in the first quarter. He accounted for six first downs. Central Michigan RB/RS **Kobe Lewis** (#4, Jr., Americus, Ga.) had 27 touches three different ways for 190 all-purpose yards and a score in a 31-23, come-from-behind win over Eastern Michigan. Lewis carried 18 times for 108 yards, returned two kickoffs, caught seven passes and accounted for seven first downs.

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Alabama WR/RS **Devonta Smith** (#6, Sr., Amite, La.) had 10 touches for 198 yards and a TD in a 42-13 win over Auburn. Smith opened the scoring with a 66-yard TD catch on 'Bama's first drive. He had 171 receiving yards on seven catches, carried once and returned two punts for 18 yards. Smith accounted for five first downs. N.C. State WR/RS **Thayer Thomas** (#5, Gr., Wake Forest, N.C.) had 15 touches and scored three receiving TD's in a 36-29 win over Syracuse. Thomas had nine catches for 102 yards, returned a punt and his 44-yard kickoff return led to a score. Ohio RB/RS **De'Montre Tuggle** (#24, Sr., Channelview, Texas) had 17 touches three different ways for three TD's in a 52-10 win over Bowling Green. Tuggle carried 15 times for 185 yards and scored on runs of eight, 70 and 43 yards and also caught a pass, returned a kickoff and accounted for three first downs.

Paycom Jim Thorpe Award – nation's best defensive back. Semifinalists named Mon., Dec. 7; finalists named Tues., Dec. 22

Memphis S **Quindell Johnson** (#15, So., New Orleans, La.) recorded a game-high 12 tackles and a crucial interception to earn this week's Paycom Jim Thorpe Player of the Week honors in the Tigers' 10-7 victory at Navy. Johnson and the Memphis defense had little difficulty defending Navy's triple-option attack Saturday evening, holding Navy to 321 yards of total offense and just 2-of-13 on third down. The New Orleans native came up with a big interception with time winding down in the first half at the Memphis 17 to keep the score tied at 7-7. Johnson has recorded 60 tackles, an interception, forced fumble, and fumble recovery through eight games on the year. Honorable mention for the week went to Clemson DB **Mario Goodrich**, Alabama DB **Josh Jobe** and Georgia S **Lewis Cine**.

Ray Guy Award – nation's best punter. Semifinalists named Mon., Dec. 7; finalists named Tues., Dec. 22

The Augusta Sports Council announced **Kirk Christodoulou** of Pitt as its Punter of the Week. Christodoulou (#98, Jr., Melbourne, Australia) punted 10 times against Clemson for a total of 461 yards, a gross and net average of 46.1 yards without any returns. Five of his punts ended up inside Clemson's 20-yard line and he had a long punt of 53 yards. The other members of "Ray's 4" this week were **Nik Constantinou** of Texas A&M, **Ben Kiernan** from North Carolina and **Porter Wilson** of Duke.

Rimington Trophy – nation's premier center

The rise of Coastal Carolina has been one of the season's bright spots thus far. At 9-0, nationally-ranked and due for a spot in the Sun Belt Conference game, what is working up front that has the Chanticleers scoring 38.7 points per game? Start with center **Sam Thompson** (#51, Sr., Spartanburg, S.C.), who has started 19 of the last 20 games for CCU. Coastal's offense has put up more than 500 total yards three times this season, including last week at Texas State (572). The Chants' offense is the Sun Belt's best and 16th nationally with the 38.7 ppg and is in the nation's top 35 in most offensive categories, including third-down conversion (54.5 percent, 3rd), passing efficiency (178.68, 8th) and, important when judging an offensive lineman, sacks allowed (1.11 per game, 15th). CCU hosts BYU and likely the strongest defensive front it will see this season on Saturday.

Walter Camp Award – nation's most outstanding player

Buffalo RB **Jaret Patterson** (#26, Jr., Glendale, Md.) earned the award's Offensive Player of the Week. Patterson rushed for 409 yards (the second-highest single-game total in FBS history) and tied a FBS record with eight rushing touchdowns as the Bulls defeated Kent State, 70-41. Patterson averaged 11.8 yards per carry (36 carries) and scored had four scoring runs of 30 or more yards as the Bulls improved to 4-0 with the victory. The National Defensive Player of the Week went to Colorado LB **Nate Landman** (#53, Sr., Danville, Calif.). Landman recorded 11 tackles, including three quarterback sacks, as Colorado improved to 3-0 with a 20-10 victory over San Diego State. Landman led a defense that held SDSU to just a field goal and 155 yards of total offense.

William V. Campbell Trophy – nation's premier scholar-athlete

The National Football Foundation (NFF) & College Hall of Fame recently announced its 12 finalists for the 2020 William V. Campbell Trophy Presented by Mazda. Selected from a record 199 semifinalists from among all NCAA divisions and the NAIA, the 12 finalists are: **Tyler Bradfield** (LB, Grand Valley State), **Sam Ehlinger** (QB, Texas), **Jack Gibbens** (LB, Abilene Christian), **Ezra Gray** (RB, Alabama State), **Tyriq Harris** (DE, Charlotte), **Drew Himmelman** (OT, Illinois State), **Tyler Howerton** (OL, Hampden-Sydney), **Kekaula Kaniho** (DB, Boise State), **Brandon Kennedy** (OL, Tennessee), **Cameron Kinley** (CB, Navy), **Elijah Molden** (DB, Washington) and **Brady White** (QB, Memphis).

Wuerffel Trophy – exemplary community service and academic achievement. Semifinalists named Mon., Dec. 7; finalists named Tues., Dec. 22

The Wuerffel Trophy will announce its 2020 semifinalists on Monday. The Wuerffel Trophy, known as "College Football's Premier Award for Community Service," is presented annually to the Football Bowl Subdivision player who best combines exemplary community service with athletic and academic achievement.