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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

David Blough of Purdue University, Jordan Miller of the University of Washington and Niall Lewison of Otterbein University Named Mayo Clinic Comeback Player of the Year Nominees

ROCHESTER, Minn. — The College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA) in association with The Associated Press (AP) and the Fiesta Bowl organization have selected three college football student-athletes—**David Blough** of Purdue University, **Jordan Miller** of the University of Washington and **Niall Lewison** of Otterbein University—as **Mayo Clinic Comeback Player of the Year Award Nominees**.

Ten times during the 2018 college football season, three inspiring student-athletes from all levels of college football who have overcome injury, illness or other challenges will be recognized as **Mayo Clinic Comeback Player of the Year Nominees**. At the end of the season, the 30 nominees will be eligible for the **Mayo Clinic Comeback Player of the Year Award**.

Blough, Miller and Lewison join previous nominees **Caleb Farley** (Virginia Tech), **Cody Thompson** (University of Toledo), **Nate Ricci** (University of Minnesota–Duluth), **Antwan Dixon** (Kent State University), **Tanner Mangum** (Brigham Young University), **Marquez Stevenson** (University of Houston), **Jonathan Duhart** (Old Dominion University), **Donte' Harrell** (Widener University) and **Antonio Wimbush** (Carson-Newman University).

CoSIDA members can nominate deserving student-athletes at Comeback-Player.com. Here's a look at this week's three nominees.

David Blough, a fifth-year senior quarterback at Purdue University, was enjoying a solid 2017 season when it came to a crashing halt Nov. 4, the result of a horrific right ankle dislocation. Blough vowed to return, better than ever, and ready for spring practice. To the surprise of no one, the Carrollton, Texas, native did just that. After respectable performances to open the season against Northwestern and Eastern Michigan, Blough broke out in week three against Missouri, setting Purdue's single-game passing yards record (572) and the Big Ten Conference game total offense mark (590). Through six games, he completed 126 of 187 passes with 10 touchdowns and just two interceptions. He's also added 50 yards rushing and a touchdown and, this past week, caught a 7-yard touchdown pass versus Illinois.

Jordan Miller, a senior defensive back at the University of Washington, suffered a brutal broken leg at Arizona State midway through the 2017 season. Even after a setback in the spring, requiring an additional surgery, Miller returned as a starting cornerback for one of the nation's best secondaries. Through seven games, the Oceanside, Calif., native has recorded 17 tackles, two forced fumbles, one interception and five passes defended.

Niall Lewison, a redshirt sophomore defensive back at Otterbein University in Ohio, was primed to step into a substantial role in 2017 before a torn labrum in the preseason ended his chances. He remained upbeat and active despite being sidelined for the year, serving as the team's official videographer and filming all practices and games. He rehabbed and has come back stronger than ever in 2018, currently second on the team and ranking in the top 10 in the rugged Ohio Athletic Conference with 46 tackles (23 solo, 23 assisted) while adding seven passes defended. In the season opener, the North Royalton, Ohio, native blocked a game-tying field goal attempt in the closing seconds to give the Cardinals a 10-7 win over Ohio Wesleyan.

All nominees are now eligible for the **Mayo Clinic Comeback Player of the Year Award**, presented at the end of the season. Mayo Clinic, the premier sponsor, will donate \$5,000 to the general scholarship funds for the three winners and \$2,500 in the name of six other worthy finalists. In addition, the three honorees will be recognized during a special ceremony during the 2019 Fiesta Bowl. Honorees and winners are selected by a panel of writers, editors and sports information directors from CoSIDA, AP and *Touchdown Illustrated*, and representatives of the Fiesta Bowl.

Chad Pennington, the only player twice named professional football's comeback player of the year award winner (2006, 2008), will serve as the Mayo Clinic Comeback Player of the Year Award ambassador. Pennington played his college football at Marshall University and was selected in the first-round of the 2000 NFL Draft by the New York Jets.

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About Mayo Clinic

The title sponsor of CoSIDA's Comeback Player of the Year Awards program, Mayo Clinic is a nonprofit medical practice and medical research group with major campuses in Rochester, Minn.; Scottsdale and Phoenix, Ariz.; and Jacksonville, Fla. The Mayo Clinic Health System has dozens of locations in several states. Mayo Clinic was recently named the #1 hospital in the U.S. in the U.S. News & World Report rankings of top hospitals. It employs more than 4,700 physicians and scientists and 58,000 allied health staff. Learn more at www.MayoClinic.org.

About CoSIDA (College Sports Information Directors of America)

CoSIDA was founded in 1957 and is a 3,000+ member national organization comprised of the sports public relations, media relations and communications/information professionals throughout all levels of collegiate athletics in the United States and Canada. The organization is the second oldest management association in intercollegiate athletics. To learn more, visit cosida.com.

About Associated Press

The Associated Press is the essential global news network, delivering fast, unbiased news from every corner of the world to all media platforms and formats. Founded in 1846, AP today is the most trusted source of independent news and information. On any given day, more than half the world's population sees news from AP. On the web: www.ap.org.

About the Fiesta Bowl Organization

The Fiesta Bowl is a world-class community organization that executes innovative experiences, drives economic growth and champions charitable causes, inspiring pride in all Arizonans. As a nonprofit organization, it believes in the importance of community outreach and service. Through charitable giving, the organization strives to enhance Arizona nonprofit organizations that contribute to the success of communities through youth, sports and education. Since 1971, the Fiesta Bowl has worked to increase its footprint across the state and to benefit Arizonans year-round, during and outside of bowl season. In the month of December, the organization manages the PlayStation Fiesta Bowl, Cheez-It Bowl and the Fiesta Bowl Parade.

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