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McKenzie Milton of Florida State, Sean Chambers of Wyoming and J.J. Weaver of Kentucky Named 2021 Mayo Clinic Comeback Player of the Year Award Nominees

NEW YORK, NY. —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—**McKenzie Milton**, a senior quarterback at Florida State University; **Sean Chambers**, a junior quarterback for the University of Wyoming; and **J.J. Weaver** a sophomore linebacker at the University of Kentucky—as nominees for the **2021 [Mayo Clinic](#) Comeback Player of the Year Award**.

Ten times during the 2021 college football season, three inspiring student-athletes from all levels of college football who have overcome injury, illness, or other challenges, are recognized as **Mayo Clinic Comeback Player of the Year Nominees** by a panel of writers, editors, and sports information directors from CoSIDA, AP and *Touchdown Illustrated*. In December, three of the 30 nominees will be chosen as winners of the **Mayo Clinic Comeback Player of the Year Award** and will be recognized at a special ceremony during the PlayStation® Fiesta Bowl on Jan. 1, 2022, at State Farm Stadium in Glendale, Arizona. CoSIDA members can nominate football student-athletes until Nov. 1, 2021 at [Comeback-Player.com](#).

The previously announced nominees are: **Terrel Bernard** (LB, Baylor); **Yohance Burnett** (LB, Tulsa); **Jack Coan** (QB, Notre Dame); **Aidan Hutchinson** (DE, Michigan); **Brian Kearns, Jr** (RB, Stonehill College); **John Mitchell** (TE, Florida Atlantic); **Justyn Ross** (WR, Clemson); **Avery Samuels** (OL, Stetson); and **Corey Sutton** (WR, Appalachian State).

Here's a look at the inspiring stories of this week's three honorees:

Sean Chambers, a junior quarterback for the University of Wyoming suffered a season-ending fractured fibula on the third play of the 2020 season. It marked the third straight year the native of Kerman, Calif. would see his season end due to injury. Previously, he broke the fibula in his

leg in the second to last game of the 2018 season, and he tore meniscus in a knee in the eighth game of the 2019 season. For the 12 games he started in 2018-19, the 6-foot-3, 225-pounder was a dynamic dual-threat quarterback, winning 9 of his 12 starts while rushing for 896 yards and 12 TDs and completing 67-146 passes for 1,118 yards, 14 TDs and just 4 interceptions. This season he has led the Cowboys to a 4-0 start, including three second-half comebacks. His career record as a starting quarterback is currently 13-3. He has completed 57-98 passes for 750 yards, 5 TDs and 3 interceptions and rushed for 119 yards and 2 TDs. He threw for a career-high 204 yards versus Northern Illinois in a 50-43 road win earlier this season.

McKenzie Milton, a senior quarterback at Florida State University suffered a catastrophic knee injury while playing for the University of Central Florida in a game at South Florida on Nov. 23, 2018. A two-time Heisman Trophy candidate at the time, the native of Kapolei, Hawaii suffered artery and nerve damage to his leg, a dislocated knee and multiple torn ligaments and tendons. He nearly had his right leg amputated after the helmet-to-knee hit caused a lack of blood flow to his leg. Doctors removed a vein from his left leg to help create a new artery for his right leg to restore blood flow and successfully save this leg. The main goal from the surgeons who operated on him was for him to hopefully one day walk without a limp and without pain. After eight surgical procedures, he persevered through more than 1,000 days of rehabilitation, and in December 2020, transferred to Florida State. As if his story was not remarkable enough, his return to the field seemed straight from a Hollywood script. In the season-opener - a nationally televised game versus Notre Dame - FSU quarterback Jordan Travis was forced to leave the game when his helmet was knocked off with 9:09 left in the game. Milton stepped in and never left, leading the Seminoles on two scoring drives to force overtime against the ninth-ranked team in the country. The performance earned the 5-foot-11 signal-caller a starting assignment the following week. Through five games, Milton has completed 58 of 93 passes for 548 yards and two touchdowns.

J.J. Weaver, a sophomore linebacker for the University of Kentucky was having a breakout freshman campaign with 33.5 tackles and 6.5 tackles for a loss (TFL) through nine games when he suffered a torn ACL in his right knee against Florida last November. Despite missing the final two games, the redshirt freshman still earned All-SEC Freshman Team honors. The injury capped off a very difficult year for the native of Louisville, Ky. who previously had lost his father to a murder and his high school coach Rob Reader to liver cancer. As a result, his challenging off-season included both the rehabilitation of his knee and undergoing counseling to deal with his grief. Both have been successful as he returned with both a strong knee and a clear head for the Wildcats' season-opener. Through five games the 6-foot-5, 241-pound outside linebacker has recorded 14 tackles 4 sacks, 5.5 TFLs, a forced fumble and an interception. This past weekend was especially emotional for Weaver as he took the field against SEC-rival Florida, the same team he injured his knee against just 10 months ago, and helped the Wildcats upset the Gators with four tackles and his first career interception.

Past winners of the Mayo Clinic Comeback Player of the Year Award have included: **2018** – Antwan Dixon (Kent State), Seth Simmer (Dartmouth), Antonio Wimbush (Carson-Newman); **2019** – Jake Luton (Oregon State), Drew Wilson (Georgia Southern), Octavion Wilson (Salisbury University); **2020** – Jarek Broussard (Colorado), Kenneth Horsey (Kentucky) and Silas Kelly (Coastal Carolina). For a complete list of past honorees and additional details on their remarkable

comeback stories, visit www.Comeback-Player.com; follow via Twitter at [@ComebackPlayrFB](https://twitter.com/ComebackPlayrFB) via the hashtag #MayoClinicCPOY; and on Instagram at [@Comeback_Player_CFB](https://www.instagram.com/Comeback_Player_CFB). Mayo Clinic does not have any role in selecting the nominees or winners of the award.

About Mayo Clinic: [Mayo Clinic](http://www.MayoClinic.org) is a nonprofit organization committed to innovation in clinical practice, education and research, and providing compassion, expertise and answers to everyone who needs healing. Visit the [Mayo Clinic News Network](http://www.MayoClinic.org/news) for additional Mayo Clinic news. For information on COVID-19, including Mayo Clinic's Coronavirus Map tracking tool, which has 14-day forecasting on COVID-19 trends, visit the [Mayo Clinic COVID-19 Resource Center](http://www.MayoClinic.org/covid-19).

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](http://www.cosida.com).

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