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Alex Martinez of Saint Xavier University, Sam Philippi of the University of Pennsylvania and Will Roberts of MIT Named 2019 Mayo Clinic Comeback Player of the Year Award 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—**Alex Martinez** of Saint Xavier University, **Sam Philippi** of the University of Pennsylvania and **Will Roberts** of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)—as nominees for the **2019 Mayo Clinic Comeback Player of the Year Award**.

Ten times during the 2019 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** by a panel of writers, editors and sports information directors from CoSIDA, AP and *Touchdown Illustrated*. CoSIDA members can nominate student-athletes at Comeback-Player.com.

Previous nominees are: **Ashton Antwine** (Northeastern State), **Kaleb Barker** (Troy), **Shaq Bond** (Utah State), **Jamieson Craske** (Stetson), **Aaron Crawford** (UNC), **Shaun Crawford** (Notre Dame), **Frazier Daniel** (Mount Union), **Jonathan Haden** (UAB), **Jaquan Hemphill** (Hardin-Simmons), **Justin Herron** (Wake Forest), **Caleb Huntley** (Ball State), **Jake Luton** (Oregon State), **Deiontae Nicholas** (Wayne State), **Josh Paschal** (Kentucky), **Isaiah Pola-Mao** (USC), **CJ Sanders** (SMU), **Hunter Spriggs** (Chapman University), **La'Andre Thomas** (Memphis), **Amadeo West** (Army), **Isaiah Weston** (Northern Iowa), **Drew Wilson** (Georgia Southern), **Octavion Wilson** (Salisbury), **Antoine Winfield Jr.** (Minnesota) and **D.J. Wonnun** (South Carolina).

At the end of the season, three of the nominees will be chosen as **Mayo Clinic Comeback Player of the Year Award** winners and will be recognized at a special ceremony during the College Football Playoff Semifinal at the PlayStation Fiesta Bowl at State Farm Stadium in Glendale, Ariz. Additionally, \$30,000 will be donated in the names of the nine student-athletes selected as finalists to their school's general scholarship fund, with \$15,000 being awarded in the names of the three winners and \$15,000 on behalf of the six named honorable mention.

For more details, follow on social media at @ComebackPlayrFB and #MayoClinicCPOY, or visit www.Comeback-Player.com. Here's a look at this week's nominees:

Alex Martinez, the starting quarterback at Saint Xavier University of the NAIA Mid-States Football Association, was off to a strong start in 2018, before a torn ACL in the fifth game of the season versus the University of Saint Francis (Ind.) ended his promising junior season. Following surgery and an off-season of grueling physical therapy, the Burbank, Ill., native was back under center for week one of the 2019 season. He has been getting better every week, leading the Cougars to a 6-2 record and first place in the MSFA Midwest League, completing 218 of 344 passes for 2,524 yards, 25 TDs and six interceptions.

Sam Philippi, a safety for the University of Pennsylvania, had played in all 30 games over his first three seasons, twice being named All-Ivy League. His performance and leadership earned him the designation as a captain for 2018. But a hip injury in the opener versus Bucknell ended his season prematurely. The senior from Trabuco Canyon, Calif., has returned as good as ever, recording 36 tackles including a career-high 11 tackles against Yale and a game-clinching end-zone interception for the Quakers versus Sacred Heart. No stranger to helping others overcome adversity, in 2016 he donated bone marrow to a man battling cancer after being found as a match through Penn's annual "Be the Match" donor registration drive.

Will Roberts, an offensive lineman for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T.), broke both of his legs in a 2018 NCAA Tournament game at Johns Hopkins—one near the ankle and the other in the middle of his shin. He left the stadium in an ambulance to Johns Hopkins Medical Center, where he had surgery and remained for more than a week. Incredibly, after months in a wheelchair and extensive rehab, the Sacramento, Calif., native missed just one game this season before returning to his starting spot on the offensive line for the 5-2 Engineers, who are in a three-way tie for first place in the New England Women's and Men's Athletic Conference (NEWMAC).

“We understand how challenging it can be for student-athletes to return from injury or illness,” says Dr. Michael Stuart, co-director for Mayo Clinic Sports Medicine. “We are honored to be part of this award that recognizes qualities like motivation, determination and perseverance.”

About Mayo Clinic: Mayo Clinic is a nonprofit comprehensive organization committed to clinical practice, education and research, providing expert comprehensive care to everyone who needs healing. [Learn more about Mayo Clinic](#). [Visit the Mayo Clinic News Network](#).

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.

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