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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

2020 Mayo Clinic Comeback Player of the Year Award Semi-Finalists Announced

The College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA) in association with The Associated Press (AP) and the Fiesta Bowl Organization, today announced fourteen (14) **Mayo Clinic Comeback Player of the Year Award Semi-Finalists**. The three winners will be selected by a vote of Associated Press college football writers and announced on January 2, 2021 in conjunction with the PlayStation® Fiesta Bowl.

Here are the semi-finalists as selected by CoSIDA, the Associated Press, the Fiesta Bowl Organization, and the editors of *Touchdown Illustrated*.

Jarek Broussard, Soph., RB, Colorado

Prior to the start of the 2019 season Jarek, suffered a season-ending ACL injury on the same knee he had ACL surgery on in high school. Started camp this season running second on the depth chart but by the time the season started he had claimed the starting job. Opened the season with four straight 100-yard games including 187 yards and three TD's versus UCLA and 301 yards vs Arizona. He is second in the NCAA in rushing yards per game at 162.6 and became just the fourth player in Division I-A/FBS since 1996 to open a career with four 100-yard games **2020 STATS: Leads the Pac-12 in rushing yards -- 129 att -813 yds -3 TD (6.3 avg) plus 7 rec – 52 yds.**

Evan Finegan, Junior, P, Buffalo

In just the second game of the 2019 season, the sophomore punter broke his tibia and fibula when a Penn State defender's body connected with his punting leg. He underwent a four-hour surgery Sunday at Mount Nittany Medical Center in State College in which surgeons placed a rod the length of his tibia against the bone. After months of rehab, Finegan was able to punt and

practice fully during UB's spring practices and regain his starting job this season.

2020 STATS: 16 punts for a 38.8 Avg for the Bulls.

Feleipe Frank, Senior, QB Arkansas

In the third game of the 2019 season versus Kentucky, Florida starting QB Feleipe Franks, suffered a dislocated ankle that contained a fracture. He missed the remainder of the 2019 season and began a 6-9-month recovery. He transferred to Arkansas and won the starting job and started nine games for the 3-7 Razorbacks. In his return game at Florida, he had one of his best games of the season completing 15-of-19 for 250 yards and two TDs.

2020 STATS: Started nine games– 163-238-2107 yds-17 TD-4 INT- Arkansas school record 68.5% comp pct also was third on the team in rushing with 204 yards

Jake Funk, Senior, RB, Maryland

In the third game of 2019 he suffered his second-straight season-ending injury when he tore his ACL– the same ACL that ended his 2018 season after just three games as well. This year, in the Terps shortened 4-game season he led the team in rushing and stands third in rushing the Big Ten. Ran for a career high 221 yards on 21 carries vs Minnesota and 180 yards on 17 carries vs Rutgers.

2020 STATS: 60 att. -516 yds -3 TD (10.6 ave) plus 10 rec-68 yds-1 TD

Daelin Hayes, Senior, DE, Notre Dame

The senior defensive end dislocated his right shoulder on September 28, 2019 against Virginia. He previously had two surgeries on the shoulder in high school. An MRI the following day revealed significant damage to the labrum, joint capsule and bone. He would require a third surgery in October - an open repair and complete reconstruction, stabilization with a Latarjet procedure. Rehabilitation and therapy were expected to take 6-9 months for a full recovery. He grew as a leader, demonstrating to his team his commitment through his hard work, and was named a 2020 team Captain. Earned ACC Defensive Lineman of the Week honors for his performance at Georgia Tech, with two sacks and two forced fumbles.

2020 STATS: Started all 11 games for the 10-1 Fighting Irish recording 17 tackles, 6 TFL, 1 INT, 2 FF, 1 Fumble Rec.

Collin Hill, Senior, QB, South Carolina

The 6-4, 222-pound graduate transfer from Colorado State earned the Gamecocks' starting QB position after missing most of the 2019 season following an ACL injury suffered in the third game of the season. It was the third ACL surgery of his career on his left knee (2016 and 2018). Joined SC in January but did not participate in spring drills while continuing to rehab from an ACL injury. Earned the starting job and started eight games.

2020 STATS: Started eight games passing for 127-215-1411 yds-6 TD-6 INT also ran for four TD's.

Kenneth Horsey, Sophomore, OL, Kentucky

In the spring of 2018, before he was to arrive at Kentucky for his freshman season, Kenneth was complaining of a pain in his side. His parents rushed him to the emergency room where doctors ultimately found a growth on one of his heart valves. He went through open-heart surgery on April 8, 2018 and was told by doctors that football was over. He didn't listen to that advice,

came to Kentucky and redshirted the 2018 season with a goal of earning a starting spot on “The Big Blue Wall.” In 2019 he saw action in four games while continuing to train and prepare his body for the rigors of SEC football. Since his surgery in 2018, he has lost 50 pounds and because of his hard work and dedication, he earned the starting left guard spot for the 2020 season. Even a broken left hand, which required surgery during pre-season camp, did not get in his way of becoming a starter on “The Big Blue Wall.”

2020 STATS: Started seven of the Wildcats’ 10 games, missing one for a knee injury and two for COVID protocols.

Silas Kelly, Senior, LB, Coastal Carolina

Broke his hand in the first game of the 2019 season and tore his ACL in the second game in the Chanticleers first-ever win over a Power 5 school. After the knee surgery in the fall, he looked to return to spring practice but was forced to have a second operation on his knee in early spring. In just his second game back this season, after missing the final 10 games last season and undergoing two surgeries on his knee this spring, Kelly led the Chants with eight tackles, five of which were solo stops, two sacks, and two tackles-for-loss in the season-opening win over Campbell and was named the Sun Belt Defensive Player of the Week.

2020 STATS: Leads the team with 72 tackles to go along with 4.5 sacks, 1 INT.

Eric Kendzior, Redshirt Senior, DL, Louisiana Tech

Has endured multiple surgeries the past two years forcing him to miss both the 2018 and 2019 seasons due to cracked feet and a torn elbow. Following the 2017 season had three surgeries – both feet and his elbow which forced him to miss the 2018 and 2019 seasons to recover from the surgeries. This season he played first game since Dec 20, 2017 – 1,004 days.

2020 STATS: started all nine games and recorded 29 tackles 1 sack 2 TFL for the 5-4 Bulldogs.

Dylan Moses, Senior, LB, Alabama

One of the top linebackers and defensive players in the nation. The captain in the middle of the Alabama defense returned to the field after missing the 2019 season due to a torn ACL suffered in August.

2020 STATS: started all 11 games; 68 tackles, 6.5 TFL, 1.5 sacks 3 pass breakups and an interception

Kyle Pugh, Senior, LB, Northern Illinois

In 2017, Kyle suffered a ruptured bicep after recording 17 tackles in the season opener, forcing him to miss the rest of the season. Then in 2018 suffered a dislocated shoulder, but played the entire season with the injury, earning second-team All-MAC honors. In 2019, he suffered a dislocated shoulder in the second game of season and missed the rest of the year. Testing showed that he had fractured his glenoid and retore his labrum. He was given two options, retire from football or have another more involved surgery. As a man who has never lost faith in football or himself, he decided to have another surgery and was ready for opening day, starting all five games in 2020.

2020 STATS: Earned third-team All-MAC honors after tallying 36 tackles and 3.5 TFLs, including 1.5 sacks and one fumble recovery.

Tylan Wallace, Senior, WR, Oklahoma State

After putting up a remarkable season as a Biletnikoff Award finalist in 2018, Wallace tore his ACL midway through the 2019 season while on his way to another nationally recognized year. He returned in 2020 as one of the country's top WR's and led the Big 12 Conference in receptions and receiving yards during the regular season.

2020 STATS: 53 receptions 877 yards 6 TDs for the 7-3 Cowboys.

Rashad Weaver, Senior, DL, Pittsburgh

Compiled his impressive production despite missing Pitt's opening game of 2020 (COVID protocols). Missed the entire 2019 season due to an ACL injury suffered during preseason camp. Rashad's first game back after a 628-day layoff earned him Walter Camp National Defensive Player of the Week accolades. One of the country's most productive defenders, he ranks third nationally with 48 passer pressures, fifth with three forced fumbles and sixth with 14.5 tackles for loss.

2020 STATS: Through 9 games – 35 tackles, 7.5 sacks, 3 FF, 12 QBH, 14.5 TFL

James Wiggins, Senior, S, Cincinnati

Despite tearing the ACL in his left knee just days before the 2019 season opener against UCLA, the standout safety and darling of the 2018 defense managed to rehab in less than five months from an injury that can require up to a year of recovery time. In the winter, he fell down a flight of stairs and although his ACL was fine, he tore meniscus in the same leg and had to endure another surgery and then nine more weeks of rehab.

2020 STATS: played in all 9 games, 32 tackles, one sacks, one INT, 6 PDs.

“Our goal is to help fans better appreciate the roads these student-athletes have traveled,” says Doug Vance, executive director of CoSIDA. “We hope these stories of achievement can inspire other people to meet the challenges in their own lives.”

Since 2018, a panel of writers, editors and sports information directors from CoSIDA, AP and *Touchdown Illustrated* have recognized college football student-athletes each season from all divisions of college football for overcoming injury or illness, by sharing their remarkable comeback stories.

Previous winners of the **Mayo Clinic Comeback Player of the Year Award** have been: 2018 - **Antwan Dixon** (Kent State University), **Seth Simmer** (Dartmouth College); **Antonio Wimbush** (Carson-Newman University); 2019 – **Jake Luton** (Oregon State University); **Drew Wilson** (Georgia Southern University) and **Octavion Wilson** (Salisbury University). For a complete list of past honorees, visit www.Comeback-Player.com.

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) for additional Mayo Clinic news and [Mayo Clinic Facts](http://www.MayoClinic.org) for more information about Mayo.

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: Since 1971, 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 during and outside of college football bowl season. As a nonprofit organization, it is driven by its vision for the importance of community outreach and service. Through the PlayStation® Fiesta Bowl, Guaranteed Rate Bowl and its year-round events, such as the Desert Financial Fiesta Bowl Parade, corporate partnerships and numerous community events throughout the year, the organization provides charitable giving to enhance Arizona nonprofit organizations that serve communities through youth, sports and education. On the web: FiestaBowl.org

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