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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Aaron Crawford of the University of North Carolina, Amadeo West of Army and Octavion Wilson of Salisbury University 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—**Aaron Crawford** of the University of North Carolina, **Amadeo West** of Army and **Octavion Wilson** of **Salisbury University**—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. They join **Kaleb Barker** (Troy Univ.), **Josh Paschal** (University of Kentucky) and **Isaiah Pola-Mao** (USC) as finalists for the award.

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:

Aaron Crawford, a senior defensive tackle at UNC, was poised for a breakthrough season in 2018 until he suffered a torn PCL and sprained ACL during training camp. After missing the first nine games of the season, he returned for the final two contests, but was clearly not himself, recording just one tackle in limited action. The Ashburn, Va., native used the offseason to recover

and earned a second degree from UNC-Chapel Hill. With one year of eligibility left, he returns as a graduate student. In the Tar Heels first three games this season, he tallied 17 tackles, two sacks and 3.5 tackles for loss.

Amadeo West, a senior linebacker at Army, returns to the Black Knights after debilitating injuries the past two seasons. He was forced to miss the entire 2017 season after tearing his ACL during fall camp. Last year, a torn Achilles would limit the Oceanside, Calif., native to just five games. Many would have thrown in the towel after two substantial injuries, but not a West Point football player and certainly not West. After recording two tackles in the season opener, a 14-7 win versus Rice, West had six tackles and one QBH in the 24-21 overtime loss to Michigan, and then five tackles in the win versus UT-San Antonio.

Octavion Wilson, a senior wide receiver for Salisbury University, played his first two seasons of college football for Division III powerhouse Mount Union. Following a promising freshman season, in which he recorded 11 receptions and five touchdowns, he was diagnosed with pericarditis—an inflammation of the lining around the heart. While training for a comeback in 2017, the Lincoln, Del., native was diagnosed with peripheral neuropathy—a neuromuscular disease resulting from damage to the nerves outside of the brain and spinal cord. The two years of serious illness, coupled with the inability to play football, led the distraught young man to attempt to take his life several times. But, in January 2018, with both his physical and mental states improved, he dedicated himself to family, friends and faith. He transferred closer to home to earn his degree in Engineering Physics and play football for Salisbury University, a Division III school in the New Jersey Athletic Conference. In his first game in three years, he caught two passes for 28 yards in the Sea Gulls 63-28 win versus Albright College. He followed that up with three receptions for 14 yards in a 24-19 win over the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh.

“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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