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2026 Comeback Player of the Year Award Watch List Issued

NEW YORK, NY – College Sports Communicators in association with The Associated Press (AP) and Fiesta Sports Foundation, today released a “Watch List” of 94 college football student-athletes from 59 different schools currently under consideration for the **2026 Comeback Player of the Year Award**.

Since 2018, the award has recognized college football student-athletes for overcoming injury, illness, or other circumstances. At the conclusion of each season, in a vote by a panel of college football writers, editors, and sports information directors, three college football student-athletes are honored as **Comeback Player of the Year Award** winners at the Vrbo Fiesta Bowl.

College athletic communications professionals working with football programs are encouraged to nominate deserving candidates at www.Comeback-Player.com.

Here’s a look at the **2026 Comeback Player of the Year Preseason Watch List**.

PLAYER	SCHOOL	CONFERENCE	POSITION
Vic Listorti	Navy	American	RB
Jahiem White	North Texas	American	RB
Dickson Agu	Tulane	American	LB

Chris Thompson Jr.	Tulsa	American	LB
Sevion Morrison	Tulsa	American	RB
Jaden Alexis	USF	American	WR
Isaiah Crosby	California	ACC	DB
Nate Burrell	California	ACC	DL
Bryant Wesco Jr.	Clemson	ACC	WR
Nick Morris Jr.	Duke	ACC	LB
Ethan Pritchard	Florida State	ACC	LB
Justice Haynes	Georgia Tech	ACC	RB
Brody Barnhardt	NC State	ACC	S
Censere Lee	Pittsburgh	ACC	WR
Jalen Hale	SMU	ACC	WR
Jonathan Jefferson	SMU	ACC	DL
Steve Angeli	Syracuse	ACC	QB
Billy Edwards Jr.	North Carolina	ACC	QB
Monroe Mills	Virginia	ACC	OL
Xavier Brown	Virginia	ACC	RB
Jake Renfro	Illinois	Big Ten	OL
Xavier Scott	Illinois	Big Ten	DB
Tobi Osunsanmi	Indiana	Big Ten	DL
John Henry Daley	Michigan	Big Ten	DE

Rod Moore	Michigan	Big Ten	DB
Cam Fancher	Michigan State	Big Ten	QB
A.J. Turner	Minnesota	Big Ten	RB
Janiran Bonner	Nebraska	Big Ten	WR
Mac Markway	Nebraska	Big Ten	Edge/TE
Evan Stewart	Oregon	Big Ten	WR
Jeremiah Cooper	Penn State	Big Ten	DB
Max Granville	Penn State	Big Ten	DE
Tony Rojas	Penn State	Big Ten	LB
George Burhenn	Purdue	Big Ten	TE
Dantae Chin	Rutgers	Big Ten	OL
Moses Walker	Rutgers	Big Ten	LB
Malik Hartford	UCLA	Big Ten	DB
Ryan McCulloch	UCLA	Big Ten	LB
Caden Chittenden	USC	Big Ten	K
Waymond Jordan	USC	Big Ten	RB
Charlie Crowell	Washington	Big Ten	TE
Kade Eldridge	Washington	Big Ten	TE
Rashid Williams	Washington	Big Ten	WR
Trey Cooley	Washington	Big Ten	RB
Malcolm Hartzog	Arizona	Big 12	DB

Tre Smith	Arizona	Big 12	DE
DeKalon Taylor	Colorado	Big 12	RB
Jayden Cofield	Texas Tech	Big 12	DL
Quinten Joyner	Texas Tech	Big 12	RB
Will Hammond	Texas Tech	Big 12	QB
Hunter Andrews	Utah	Big 12	TE/RB
Jaden Bray	West Virginia	Big 12	WR
Zach Marker	Florida International	Conference USA	QB
Ashton Craig	Notre Dame	Independent	OL
Kyngstonn Viliamu-Asa	Notre Dame	Independent	LB
Jaden Greathouse	Notre Dame	Independent	WR
Kedren Young	Notre Dame	Independent	RB
Daymon David	Akron	MAC	S
Corey Thompson Jr.	Ball State	MAC	WR
Dorian Pringle	Bowling Green	MAC	LB
Jadyn Glasser	Central Michigan	MAC	QB
Joshua Nobles	UMass	MAC	DL
T.Y. Harding	UMass	MAC	WR
TJ Magee	UMass	MAC	CB
Cole Cabana	Western Michigan	MAC	RB
Ben Ford	Boise St	Pac 12	WR

Pearce Spurlin III	Colorado State	Pac 12	TE
Noble Thomas Jr.	Oregon State	Pac 12	DB
Jah-Marien Latham	Alabama	SEC	LB
Jeremiah Beaman	Alabama	SEC	DL
Champ Anthony	Auburn	SEC	S
Chas Nimrod	Auburn	SEC	WR
LJ McCray	Florida	SEC	DL
Ethan Barbour	Georgia	SEC	TE
Jordan Hall	Georgia	SEC	DL
Aaron Gates	Kentucky	SEC	DB
CJ Baxter	Kentucky	SEC	RB
Sam Greene	Kentucky	SEC	OLB
Sam Leavitt	LSU	SEC	QB
Whit Weeks	LSU	SEC	LB
Ahmad Hardy	Missouri	SEC	RB
Jahlil Florence	Missouri	SEC	CB
Jayden Gibson	South Carolina	SEC	WR
Andre Cojoe	Texas	SEC	OL
Ja'Den McBurrows	Appalachian State	Sun Belt	DB
Ja'Quez Cross	Appalachian State	Sun Belt	RB
Kanye Roberts	Appalachian State	Sun Belt	RB

Chance Gamble	Georgia Southern	Sun Belt	DB
Josh Dallas	Georgia Southern	Sun Belt	WR
Max Johnson	Georgia Southern	Sun Belt	QB
Blake Baker	LA Tech	Sun Belt	QB
Kolbe Fields	LA Tech	Sun Belt	LB
Koa Naotala	Old Dominion	Sun Belt	LB
Goose Crowder	Troy	Sun Belt	QB
Andrew Body	Alabama State	SWAC	QB

Previous winners of the **Comeback Player of the Year Award** include: **2025 - Christian Bodnar** (Liberty University); **Byrum Brown** (USF); **Bryce Steele** (Boston College); **2024: Ike Larsen** (Utah State); **Raheim Sanders** (South Carolina); **Tyler Shough** (Louisville); **2023 – Blake Corum** (Michigan); **Jacob Dobbs** (Holy Cross); **Mike Hollins** (Virginia); **2022 - Mohamed Ibrahim** (Minnesota); **Laiatu Latu** (UCLA); **Michael Penix Jr.** (Washington); **2021 – Aidan Hutchinson** (Michigan); **McKenzie Milton** (Florida State); **J.J. Weaver** (Kentucky); **2020 – Jarek Broussard** (Colorado); **Kenneth Horsey** (Kentucky); **Silas Kelly** (Coastal Carolina); **2019 – Jake Luton** (Oregon State); **Drew Wilson** (Georgia Southern); **Octavion Wilson** (Salisbury); **2018 - Antwan Dixon** (Kent State), **Seth Simmer** (Dartmouth); **Antonio Wimbush** (Carson-Newman). For a complete list of past honorees, visit www.Comeback-Player.com.

About College Sports Communicators: College Sports Communicators is the premier membership association for all strategic, creative and digital professionals working in intercollegiate athletics across all levels for colleges, universities and conferences across the United States and Canada. CSC provides year-round leadership, community, professional development/education, recognition and advocacy for its 4,900 members. Founded in 1957 as the College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA), the organization rebranded in 2022 to position itself as a more inclusive organization for communicators in all types of roles and to lead an industry change where strategic and creative professionals are more aligned. CSC's signature work includes the annual CSC Unite convention each June and the administration of the prestigious Academic All-America® program and Hall of Fame. Since 1952, more than 46,000 of the world's most elite student-athletes have been recognized with Academic All-America status in all sports. To learn more, visit CollegeSportsCommunicators.com.

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