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2026 Comeback Player of the Year Award Mid-Season Watch List Issued

NEW YORK, NY – College Sports Communicators in association with The Associated Press (AP) and Fiesta Sports Foundation, today released a "Mid-Season Watch List" of 38 college football student-athletes 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.

Some of the top performers on the field this season include: **Sam Leavitt – QB, LSU** (Passing: 180 - 256 - 2173 yds - 17 TD/Rushing: 72 -324 - 8 TD); **Jahiem White – RB, North Texas** (Rushing: 142 - 1054 – 7.4 - 13 TD/Receiving: 29 – 277 - 2 TD); **Re'Shaun Sanford II - RB, Houston** (Rushing: 87 - 447 – 5.1 - 2 TD/Receiving: 11-138) **Tobi Osunsanmi DL, Indiana** (34 tackles – 15.5 TFL – 10 Sacks); **Tony Rojas – LB, Penn State** (58 tackles – 10.5 TFL – 5 Sacks – 2 Int); **Chris Thompson Jr – LB, Tulsa** (81 tackles; 3.5 TFL).

Here's a look at the **2026 Comeback Player of the Year Mid-Season Watch List.**

PLAYER	SCHOOL	CONFERENCE	POSITION
Jahiem White	North Texas	AAC	RB
Dickson Agu	Tulane	AAC	LB
Chris Thompson Jr.	Tulsa	AAC	LB
Isaiah Crosby	California	ACC	DB
Bryant Wesco Jr.	Clemson	ACC	WR
Nick Morris Jr.	Duke	ACC	LB
Justice Haynes	Georgia Tech	ACC	RB
Censere Lee	Pittsburgh	ACC	WR
Steve Angeli	Syracuse	ACC	QB
Billy Edwards Jr.	UNC	ACC	QB
Monroe Mills	Virginia	ACC	OL
Jake Renfro	Illinois	BIG10	OL
Xavier Scott	Illinois	BIG10	DB
Tobi Osunsanmi	Indiana	BIG10	DL
Rod Moore	Michigan	BIG10	DB
John Henry Daley	Michigan	BIG10	DE
Evan Stewart	Oregon	BIG10	WR
Tony Rojas	Penn State	BIG10	LB
Moses Walker	Rutgers	BIG10	LB

Malik Hartford	UCLA	BIG10	DB
Waymond Jordan	USC	BIG10	RB
Re'Shaun Sanford II	Houston	BIG 12	RB
Malcolm Hartzog	Arizona	BIG12	DB
Will Hammond	Texas Tech	BIG12	QB
Ashton Craig	Notre Dame	Independent	OL
Jaden Greathouse	Notre Dame	Independent	WR
Dorian Pringle	Bowling Green	MAC	LB
T.Y. Harding	UMass	MAC	WR
Pearce Spurlin III	Colorado State	PAC12	TE
Chas Nimrod	Auburn	SEC	WR
LJ McCray	Florida	SEC	DL
CJ Baxter	Kentucky	SEC	RB
Sam Leavitt	LSU	SEC	QB
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

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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