



BUTKUS AWARD® 39th SEASON WATCH LIST ANNOUNCED

Search begins today for nation's top linebacker; celebration event planned for January 2024

CHICAGO, UNITED STATES, August 10, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Contact: Matthew Butkus
MatthewButkus@ButkusFoundation.org
312-593-6053

BUTKUS AWARD® 39th SEASON WATCH LIST ANNOUNCED

Search begins today for nation's top linebacker; celebration event planned for January 2024

The 39th annual Butkus Award® selection process for the top linebackers in the country got underway today with the release of the collegiate preseason watch list.

The number of linebackers on the watch list, 51, is a nod to the storied "51" pro jersey worn by the award's namesake, Dick Butkus, who was named by NFL Films as the greatest defensive player in football history. The Butkus Award recognizes the best linebackers in football.

Candidates for the college Butkus Award are on the watch list from 44 schools, including a previous finalist: Jamon Dumas-Johnson of Georgia and the two recurring semifinalists: Ohio State's Tommy Eichenberg and UConn's Jackson Mitchell. The Big Ten leads all conferences with 12 representatives, followed by the SEC with 11. Teammates from seven schools – Clemson, Georgia, LSU, Michigan, Notre Dame, Ohio State, Penn State – have been named to the list and all 10 Division I FBS conferences are represented. The list also features one FCS player.

The award semifinalists are expected to be named Oct. 30 with finalists to follow Nov. 20. The winner will be named on or before Dec. 6. Appearing on the watch list is not a requirement to win the award.

"I am always excited about seeing our great watch list players on the field," said Butkus, the College and Pro Football Hall of Famer. "When an outstanding player receives the Butkus Award he will know two things: First, he is recognized as the best of the best linebackers in America; Second, and in the long run most important, he will understand this recognition brings a responsibility of giving back."

All 2023 Butkus Award winners will be honored at a televised event in Jan. 2024. BTN (the Big Ten

Network) aired the event last season, featuring Butkus and numerous noted NFL Alumni. [To watch the show online via YouTube, click here.](#)

Founded in 1985, the Butkus Award honors linebackers at three levels while supporting causes important to the Butkus family. Causes include the Butkus Takes Heart™ initiative encouraging early cardiovascular screening among adults, and the I Play Clean® initiative encouraging athletes to train naturally without performance-enhancing drugs.

A 51-member expert panel of coaches, scouts, and journalists guides the selection process. Past winners of the collegiate award include such greats as Patrick Willis, Von Miller, Luke Kuechly, Devin White, Roquan Smith and many more. The Butkus Award is increasingly focused on recognizing linebackers who consistently play off the ball on their feet in a two-point stance in traditional form.

The Butkus Awards will be unveiling a new trophy design for this year's recipients. Designed by renowned sculptor George Lundeen, whose works include the Red Grange and Dick Butkus statues outside Memorial Stadium at the University of Illinois.

Jack Campbell of Iowa was the 2022 recipient. The 18th overall pick in the 2023 NFL Draft by the Detroit Lions was also the recipient of the National Football Foundation's prestigious William V. Campbell Trophy, annually awarded to college football's top scholar-athlete.

The watch list for the 2023 Butkus Award for high school players will be released later this month. [The Butkus Award watch list will be posted on the new Butkus Award website.](#) thebutkusaward.com, powered by American Eagle, a global website development and digital marketing agency.

The complete 51-man Butkus Award preseason collegiate watch list follows:

Jaishawn Barham, Maryland
Michael Barrett, Michigan
JD Bertrand, Notre Dame
Tatum Bethune, Florida State
Ben Bywater, BYU
Abdul Carter, Penn State
Barrett Carter, Clemson
Aaron Casey, Indiana
Steele Chambers, Ohio State
Mason Cobb, USC
Khari Coleman, Ole Miss
Junior Colson, Michigan
Edgerrin Cooper, Texas A&M
Shaun Dolac, Buffalo

Jamon Dumas-Johnson (F), Georgia
Tommy Eichenberg (SF), Ohio State
JaQues Evans, WKU
Justin Flowe, Arizona
Jaylan Ford, Texas
Dallas Gant, Toledo
Easton Gibbs, Wyoming
Cedric Gray, North Carolina
Cal Haladay, Michigan State
Jason Henderson, Old Dominion
Ty'Ron Hopper, Missouri
Nick Jackson, Iowa
Curtis Jacobs, Penn State
Jestin Jacobs, Oregon
Jason Johnson, UCF
Tyrice Knight, UTEP
Deontae Lawson, Alabama
Marist Liufau, Notre Dame
Jordan Magee, Temple
Jackson Mitchell (SF), UConn
Smael Mondon Jr., Georgia
Darius Muasau, UCLA
Maema Njongmeta, Wisconsin
Chris Paul Jr., Arkansas
Harold Perkins Jr., LSU
John Pius, William & Mary
Tyreem Powell, Rutgers
Karene Reid, Utah
DJ Schramm, Boise State
Jackson Sirmon, Cal
Omar Speights, LSU
Danny Stutsman, Oklahoma
Jeremiah Trotter Jr., Clemson
Trevin Wallace, Kentucky
Nathaniel Watson, Mississippi State
Marlowe Wax, Syracuse
Payton Wilson, N.C. State

By conference: Big Ten 12, SEC 11, ACC 6, Pac-12 6, Big 12 4, Independents 3, Conference USA 2, Mid-American 2, Mountain West 2, American Athletic 1, Sun Belt 1, FCS 1.

Returning Semi Finalists and Finalists

Jamon Dumas-Johnson (F), Georgia
Tommy Eichenberg (SF), Ohio State
Jackson Mitchell (SF), UConn

The Butkus Award is a member of the National College Football Awards Association (NCFAA). Founded in 1997, the NCFAA includes college football's most prestigious awards and its 24 awards have honored more than 900 recipients dating back to 1935.

Matthew Butkus
The Butkus Foundation
+1 312-593-6053
MatthewButkus@ButkusFoundation.org

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/649288196>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2023 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.