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2017 BRONKO NAGURSKI TROPHY FINALISTS NAMED

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (FWAA) – Five finalists for the **2017 Bronko Nagurski Trophy** – presented annually to the nation’s top defensive player by the **Football Writers Association of America** and the **Charlotte Touchdown Club** – were named on Wednesday.

In alphabetical order, the finalists are: North Carolina State defensive end **Bradley Chubb**, Alabama safety **Minkah Fitzpatrick**, Iowa middle linebacker **Josey Jewell**, Houston defensive tackle **Ed Oliver** and Georgia outside linebacker **Roquan Smith**.

The Bronko Nagurski Trophy recipient will be chosen from these five finalists. The FWAA All-America Committee, after voting input from the association’s entire membership, selects the best defensive player in college football.

The Bronko Nagurski Trophy Banquet, presented by ACN, will be held on Mon., Dec. 4, at the Charlotte Convention Center. In addition to the 2017 Bronko Nagurski Trophy winner’s announcement, the banquet will also celebrate the recipient of the Bronko Nagurski Legends Award, sponsored by the CTC and Florida East Coast Railway.

Notre Dame’s Ross Browner, a member of the FWAA’s 1976 and 1977 All-America teams, winner of the 1976 Outland Trophy and a member of the College Football Hall of Fame, is this year’s Legends Award recipient. Georgia coach Kirby Smart will be the keynote speaker at the banquet.

A rundown of the five 2017 Bronko Nagurski Trophy finalists:

Bradley Chubb, DE, NC State (6-4, 275, Sr., Marietta, Ga.): Chubb leads the FBS in tackles for loss this season for the Wolfpack (7-3). Of his 23.5 tackles for loss (for minus-98 yards), 10 have been sacks for 66 yards in losses. He has 62 total tackles, nine quarterback hurries, three forced fumbles, two passes broken up and a blocked kick. Chubb joins linebacker Levar Fisher (2000) as the only Wolfpack players to earn a Nagurski finalist nod.

Minkah Fitzpatrick, S, Alabama (6-1, 202, Jr., Old Bridge, N.J.): The leader of the defensive backfield for the unbeaten Crimson Tide (10-0), Fitzpatrick has made 44 total tackles, collected 5.5 tackles for 25 yards in losses, including 1.5 sacks for 15 yards in losses. In addition, he has intercepted a pass, broken up six passes, hurried the quarterback three times, forced a fumble and blocked a kick. Alabama ranks eighth in the country in fewest passing yards allowed per game (167 ypg). Fitzpatrick is the 11th Alabama player to be a Nagurski finalist, including last year’s recipient Jonathan Allen. The Crimson Tide has had a finalist now in each of the last seven seasons.

Josey Jewell, MLB, Iowa (6-2, 236, Sr., Decorah, Iowa): Jewell is fourth in the country in total tackles (104) for the Hawkeyes (6-4). He has registered 9.5 tackles for 39 yards in losses (including 2.5 sacks for 24 yards in losses). He has chipped in an interception (and returned it 33 yards) and added five passes broken up, three quarterback hurries, one fumble recovery and one forced fumble. Jewell is the second Iowa player to be named a Nagurski finalist, joining linebacker Pat Angerer in 2009.

Ed Oliver, DT, Houston (6-3, 290, So., Houston, Texas): A second-team FWAA All-American in 2016, Oliver followed up his freshman season with another fine year. He has 53 total tackles for the Cougars (6-3). Of those, he has 10 tackles for 39 yards in losses (with 2.5 sacks for 13 yards in losses), three passes broken up, seven quarterback hurries, one fumble recovery, two forced fumbles and one blocked kick. Oliver is the first Houston player to earn a Nagurski finalist accolade.



Roquan Smith, OLB, Georgia (6-1, 225, Jr., Montezuma, Ga.): The leading tackler for the Bulldogs (9-1), Smith has made 82 total tackles this season. He has 4.5 tackles for loss, including 2.5 sacks for 14 yards in losses. He also has broken up two passes, hurried the quarterback 10 times and forced a fumble. Georgia ranks fifth in the FBS in total defense, giving up just 277.5 yards per game. Smith is the fifth Georgia player to be named a Nagurski finalist, joining 1998 recipient Champ Bailey and two-time finalist David Pollack (2002, '04).

The FWAA has chosen a National Defensive Player of the Year since 1993. In 1995, the FWAA joined with the CTC and named the award in honor of the legendary two-way player from the University of Minnesota. Nagurski dominated college football then became a star for professional football's Chicago Bears in the 1930s. Bronislaw "Bronko" Nagurski is a charter member of both the College Football and Pro Football Halls of Fame.

The Bronko Nagurski Trophy is a member of the **National College Football Awards Association (NCFAA)**, which encompasses college football's most prestigious awards. Founded in 1997, the NCFAA and its 24 awards now boast over 800 recipients, dating to 1935. Visit ncfaa.org to learn more about our story.

The **Football Writers Association of America**, founded in 1941, consists of 1,300 men and women who cover college football. The membership includes journalists, broadcasters and publicists, as well as key executives in all the areas that involve the game. The FWAA works to govern areas that include game-day operations, major awards and its annual All-America team. For more information about the FWAA and its award programs, contact Steve Richardson at tiger@fwaa.com.

ABOUT THE CHARLOTTE TOUCHDOWN CLUB AND ITS SPONSORS

The **Charlotte Touchdown Club** is a non-profit organization founded in 1990 for the purpose of promoting high school, collegiate, and professional football in the Charlotte, N.C., region. The club's activities and services focus community attention on the outstanding citizenship, scholarship, sportsmanship, and leadership of area athletes and coaches. For more information, contact John Rocco (704-347-2918 or jrocco@touchdownclub.com). The official website of the Charlotte Touchdown Club is touchdownclub.com.

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