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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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2017 OUTLAND TROPHY SEMIFINALISTS UNVEILED

OMAHA (FWAA) – The hunt for the **2017 Outland Trophy** is down to three finalists: Oklahoma offensive tackle **Orlando Brown**, Notre Dame offensive guard **Quenton Nelson** and Houston defensive tackle **Ed Oliver**.

That field for the 72nd Outland Trophy, which is awarded to the best interior lineman in college football on offense or defense, will be among awards featured at 6:30 p.m. ET on Tues., Nov. 21, on *The Home Depot College Football Awards Nomination Special* on ESPNU. The winner of the Outland Trophy will be revealed on Thurs., Dec. 7, on ESPN during *The Home Depot College Football Awards* from the College Football Hall of Fame in Atlanta.



Traditional college football powerhouses Oklahoma and Notre Dame each have had former Outland Trophy winners and finalists. Houston has never had a winner nor a finalist for the award dating to its origins in 1946 when the Fighting Irish's George Connor claimed the inaugural Outland. The FWAA started naming finalists in 1987.

Over the years, Oklahoma has had five Outland Trophy winners, starting during the Coach Bud Wilkinson era with Jim Weatherall (1951) and two years later J.D. Roberts (1953). Lee Roy Selmon (1975), Greg Roberts (1978) and Jammal Brown (2004) are the other Sooners to claim the award. A Notre Dame player won the award twice in its first three years, with the Fighting Irish's Bill Fischer being named in 1948. The last Notre Dame Outland Trophy winner was more than 40 years ago – Ross Browner in 1976.

The three 2017 finalists were chosen from six semifinalists. The other semifinalists were Notre Dame offensive tackle Mike McGlinchey, Western Michigan offensive tackle Chukwuma Okorafor and Ohio State center Billy Price.

Here is a closer look at each of the three finalists:

Orlando Brown, OT, Oklahoma (6-8, 345, Jr., Duluth, Ga.): The Sooners' team captain is a mainstay on the line, which triggers an explosive attack that leads the FBS in total offense (588.7 yards per game). The Sooners (10-1) are second in the country in passing offense (381.8 yards) and No. 5 in the country in scoring (44.0 points per game). Brown was a second-team FWAA All-American last season and has started in all 37 games at left tackle since the beginning of the 2015 season. Helps protect quarterback Baker Mayfield, a Heisman Trophy contender.

Quenton Nelson, G, Notre Dame (6-5, 330, Sr., Holmdel, N.J.): Captain of the Fighting Irish has not surrendered a sack or quarterback hit and allowed just two quarterback hurries in 744 offensive snaps. He has been an anchor on an offense that has rushed for 300 or more yards in seven of 11 games this season. His performance at guard has been ranked tops in the country by Pro Football Focus. Notre Dame (9-2) has produced 13 100-yard individual rushing performances this season and 290.5 rushing yards a game, the latter sixth best in the FBS.

Ed Oliver, DT, Houston (6-3, 290, So., Houston, Texas): A second-team FWAA All-American in 2016, Oliver has an unusually high number of tackles for an interior lineman with 55 in 10 games this season as well. He has 11 tackles for 45 yards in losses (3.5 sacks for 19 yards in losses), three passes broken up, seven quarterback hurries, one fumble recovery, two forced fumbles and a blocked field goal for the Cougars (6-4). Oliver is also a finalist for the FWAA's Bronko Nagurski Trophy, presented to the national defensive player of the year. He has 34 tackles for loss in 23 career games.

The **Outland Trophy**, which has been awarded annually by the FWAA since 1946, is named after the late John Outland, an All-America lineman at the University of Pennsylvania in the late 1800s. The Outland Trophy is the third-oldest award in major college football behind the Heisman Trophy and Maxwell Award.

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For the 21st consecutive year, the Outland Trophy Presentation Banquet will occur in Omaha and will be sponsored by the Greater Omaha Sports Committee. At the same banquet, the fourth annual Tom Osborne Legacy Award, sponsored by the Rotary Club of Omaha-Downtown, will be presented to Florida State coaching legend Bobby Bowden.

The Outland Trophy Award Dinner will be held on Wed., Jan. 10, in Omaha at the DoubleTree Hotel Downtown. Also appearing at the dinner for the 20th straight year will be the winners of Nebraska's football senior awards – the Tom Novak Trophy, the Guy Chamberlin Trophy and the Cletus Fischer Native Son Award.

The Outland Trophy is a member of the **National College Football Awards Association (NCFAA)**, which encompasses the most prestigious awards in college football. 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**, a non-profit organization founded in 1941, consists of more than 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 or call 214-870-6516.

The **Greater Omaha Sports Committee**, founded in 1977, is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, consisting of more than 900 men and women from the City of Omaha, the State of Nebraska, and others. The membership serves to communicate, develop, initiate and promote sports activities in the Greater Omaha sports area. In addition to the Outland Trophy Presentation Banquet, the Greater Omaha Sports Committee promotes high school, college, and professional sports in the Greater Omaha area and the Midwest.

