



## PRESENTED BY THE NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR INFECTIOUS DISEASES

### THREE FINALISTS NAMED FOR 2018 OUTLAND TROPHY

**DALLAS (FWAA)** – A pair of Alabama teammates – offensive tackle **Jonah Williams** and nose guard **Quinnen Williams** – and Clemson defensive tackle **Christian Wilkins** were named as the three finalists for the **2018 Outland Trophy** by the **Football Writers Association of America**.

The 2018 Outland Trophy, presented by the **National Foundation for Infectious Diseases** (NFID), is awarded annually to the nation's best college interior lineman on offense or defense. NFID is presenting the trophy to help increase awareness about the importance of annual flu prevention. Getting vaccinated each year is your best line of defense against the flu.

Since the Outland Trophy began naming finalists for the award in 1987, this is just the second time teammates have been finalists. In 1997, Nebraska offensive guard Aaron Taylor and defensive tackle Jason Peter were finalists for the award won by Taylor.

Alabama has had four Outland Trophy winners since Chris Samuels won the program's first Outland in 1999, with its most recent winner being Cam Robinson in 2016 along with Barrett Jones (2011) and Andre Smith (2008). The Crimson Tide have had at least one semifinalist in seven of the last eight seasons. Quinnen Williams would be the first defensive player to win the Outland Trophy for Alabama; each of the previous four have been offensive tackles. Wilkins is Clemson's third finalist in program history but would be the Tigers' first winner. Clemson's last finalist was offensive tackle Stacy Long in 1990, and the Tigers also had defensive tackle Michael Dean Perry among the finalists in 1987.

University of Wisconsin All-American Joe Thomas, the 2006 Outland Trophy winner who retired earlier this year after a stellar 11-year career with NFL's Cleveland Browns, is serving as the Outland Trophy #FightFlu ambassador on behalf of NFID. Thomas has been an avid supporter of annual flu vaccination and is making media appearances on behalf of the #FightFlu public awareness campaign to remind everyone 6 months and older to get an annual flu vaccine.

The recipient of the 73rd Outland Trophy will be announced during ESPN's *The Home Depot College Football Awards* on Dec. 6, live from the College Football Hall of Fame in Atlanta. The official presentation to the winner will be made at the Outland Trophy Awards Dinner produced by the Greater Omaha Sports Committee on Jan. 9, 2019.

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

- **Christian Wilkins, DT, Clemson (6-4, 300, Gr., Springfield, Mass.):** A standout player for the unbeaten Tigers, even as part of a defensive line that features four returning All-Americans. Clemson has held opponents without an offensive touchdown in eight consecutive quarters dating to Nov. 3. Wilkins was an FWAA First-Team All-America selection in 2016. He has 12.0 tackles for loss, second on the team, to go with four sacks and 45 tackles (32 solo) for the season. Clemson was No. 1 nationally in tackles for loss in the first two of Wilkins' three prior seasons in the middle and was No. 6 last year. His 16.0 stops behind the line have resulted in 85 yards of losses. Wilkins will play in his 55th career game Saturday against South Carolina. Wilkins graduated in 2017 with a degree in communications in only two-and-a-half years.
- **Jonah Williams, OT, Alabama (6-5, 301, Jr., Folsom, Calif.):** The left tackle for the unbeaten Crimson Tide continues to pace the nation's No. 5 but arguably most-feared offense. Williams was the Outland Trophy Offensive Player of the Month for September after grading out above 90 percent for the month. He is the leader of the nation's third-best offense (541.5 total ypg average) that has topped 500 total yards in 10 of 11 games. The junior has started all 40 games in his career and had perhaps his best game against LSU when Alabama averaged 7.6 yards per rush and gained 576 yards against a then-Top-10 defense and allowed only one sack on a season-high 42 pass attempts. The Crimson Tide are third in the nation in scoring at 48.7 points per game and only yield 0.91 sacks per game, tied for ninth nationally.
- **Quinnen Williams, NG, Alabama (6-4, 295, So., Birmingham, Ala.):** The upstart sophomore leads unbeaten Alabama with 15.0 tackles for loss for minus-62 yards, second in the SEC, and is tied for 10th in the SEC with 6.0 sacks. Like Jonah Williams, he too posted a career game against LSU tallying career highs in tackles (10) and sacks (2.5) and tying a career high in tackles for loss (3.5). Williams clogs the middle and allows those around him to create havoc – Alabama has had at least 10 tackles for loss in five of 11 games and the Crimson Tide's 37 sacks are tied for No. 6 nationally. Williams' 55 tackles include 34 solo stops.

The three finalists were chosen by the FWAA from a field of eight semifinalists that also included, in alphabetical order: North Carolina State center Garrett Bradbury, Wisconsin guard Michael Deiter, Clemson offensive tackle Mitch Hyatt, Houston defensive tackle Ed Oliver and Oklahoma guard Ben Powers.

The **Outland Trophy** is the third-oldest major college football award. Created in 1946 when Dr. John Outland presented the FWAA with a financial contribution to initiate the award, the Outland Trophy has been given to the best interior lineman in college football ever since. Dr. Outland, an All-American at the University of Pennsylvania in the late 1890s, eventually took up practice in Kansas City, Mo. An avid outdoorsman, Dr. Outland believed linemen did not get the credit they deserved and wanted an award to recognize them.

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 [ncaa.org](http://ncaa.org) to learn more about our story.

#### About the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases

Founded in 1973, the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to educating the public and healthcare professionals about the burden, causes, prevention, and treatment of infectious diseases across the lifespan. Visit [nfid.org](http://nfid.org) for more information.

#### About the Football Writers Association of America

Founded in 1941, the non-profit Football Writers Association of America (FWAA) consists of more than 1,300 members, including journalists, broadcasters, publicists and key executives in all areas of college football. Led by current President Stefanie Loh of the Seattle Times, longtime Executive Director Steve Richardson, and a board of veteran journalists, the association continues to grow and work to help college football prosper at all levels. Visit [footballwriters.com](http://footballwriters.com) for more information about the FWAA and its award programs.

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