



IN THE TRENCHES: THIS WEEK'S OUTLAND TROPHY MATCHUPS

PRESENTED BY THE NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR INFECTIOUS DISEASES MISSISSIPPI STATE AT KANSAS STATE, 12 P.M. ET ON ESPN

One of the nation's most aggressive and stingiest defensive fronts – fresh off a record-setting performance in its opener – faces one of the country's most experienced offensive lines, still intact from its own record-setting 2017 season. Each line features outstanding Outland Trophy candidates, and when they square off on national television to start the Saturday slate, there may not be a better combined collection of starting linemen playing on this day.

Jeffery Simmons (Macon, Miss.) was a beast in Mississippi State's season-opening 63-6 romp over Stephen F. Austin. The junior nose guard wasted no time making a presence, racking up a career-high 3.5 tackles for loss in the first half, part of the Bulldogs' school-record 17 tackles for loss in the game. Simmons (6-4, 300) has 15.5 tackles for loss in his last 14 games. He earned preseason first- or second-team All-America accolades from multiple national media outlets coming off a 2017 All-SEC First Team season where he led the conference in sacks with 10.5 – the seventh-highest total in MSU history and the most for a Bulldog since 2005. He had 12 tackles for loss on the season (11th in the SEC) to go with two forced fumbles and two fumble recoveries.

Watch out for Simmons on special teams as well, where his athleticism helped him lead the nation last year with three blocked kicks. He created a personal highlight reel last year at Louisiana Tech, blocking a punt that he recovered in the end zone for a touchdown and later returned a fumble 90 yards for another score. Simmons was ninth in scoring (12 pts.) for the Bulldogs as a defensive tackle.

The charge of stopping MSU's formidable front belongs in part to **Dalton Risner** (Wiggins, Colo.), a returning First Team All-America right tackle. The senior (6-5, 308) has 38 career starts and Saturday will be his 26th consecutive start at right tackle. Risner is ranked as the 10th-best overall player and the nation's top offensive lineman entering the season by Pro Football Focus, which graded him at a 90.7 mark in 2017 with a 98.9 mark on pass blocking efficiency (fourth-highest among FBS tackles). The three-year letterman is only the fifth three-year captain for the Wildcats and anchors perhaps the best offensive line coached by Charlie Dickey, K-State's Co-Offensive Coordinator and Offensive Line Coach who has produced 22 All-Big 12 offensive linemen in his 10 seasons with the Wildcats.

Risner allowed only three quarterback pressures in 2017 according to PFF, and he's given up only 24 quarterback pressures over his 1,116 career pass blocking snaps (2.15 percent). He is well-known as one of the nation's leaders off the field as well and was a member of the American Football Coaches Association Good Works team last season and is a candidate for the honor this season as well. He has been on the All-Academic Big 12 First Team the past two years.

WYOMING AT MISSOURI, 7:30 P.M. ET ON ESPNU

There are special elements to the college game that, once left behind, cannot be recreated. Such was among the considerations for Missouri defensive tackle **Terry Beckner** (East St. Louis, Ill.), who turned down the NFL to return to the Tigers for his senior season. Once labeled as the No. 1 overall recruit nationally, Beckner (6-4, 295) has overcome a pair of ACL injuries that took away his 2015 and 2016 seasons. Beckner completed a full 13-game slate last year and posted impressive numbers for an interior lineman: career-high totals in tackles (38), tackles for loss (11.0), sacks (7.0) and quarterback hurries (5). He had one tackle in limited action against UT Martin last week.

Also at Mizzou is senior **Paul Adams** (Nashville, Tenn.), one of the SEC's most experienced linemen with 26 consecutive starts at right tackle. The team captain continually grades out as one of the SEC's top linemen playing on one of the nation's hottest offenses – the Tigers have averaged 51.3 points per game in their last seven regular-season games.

Wyoming counters on its defensive line with tackle **Youhanna Ghaifan** (Grand Island, Neb.), a junior who was 23rd nationally and tops in the Mountain West in tackles for loss at 1.29 per game (15.5 total). Ghaifan (his full name is pronounced yo-HAWN-uh, guh-FAWN) is a part of an experienced defense that returns all four starters on the line and eight starters overall. He had 0.5 tackles for loss in last week's loss to Washington State and 1.5 against New Mexico State in the opener, giving him a career total of 22.0 that already makes him 10th on Wyoming's career TFL list. He also had four tackles and a pass breakup against WSU.

OTHER MATCHUP OF NOTE ...

• **Utah at NIU (7:30 p.m. ET on ESPNews):** NIU returns every player who started a game on its offensive line last year and has another of the country's most experienced lines with 115 combined starts. Standing out among them is senior left tackle **Max Scharping** (Green Bay, Wis.), a hulky 6-6, 320-pounder who has started every game of his career for the Huskies. Scharping is a two-time All-MAC selection and an Academic All-American from a year ago. He had a pass-block efficiency of 99.0 last year according to PFF, and allowed just six pressures on 458 pass-blocking snaps (1.3 percent). On Utah's offensive line is **Lo Falamaka** (West Valley City, Utah), a sixth-year senior who has started 14 of his last 15 games and played in 26 games overall along the Utes' front. Falamaka was on the field for a team-high 69 plays in last week's win over Weber State, and helped the Utes rush for 268 yards, the Pac-12's highest total from the first week and 25th nationally.

Scott Farrell, collegepressbox.com

2018 OUTLAND TROPHY PRESEASON WATCH LIST

OL **Paul Adams**, Missouri@Paul_Adams77
 OL **Trey Adams**, Washington
 OL **Hakeem Adeniji**, Kansas
 C **Ryan Anderson**, Wake Forest
 OL **Alex Bars**, Notre Dame.....@AlexBars_
 OL **Ryan Bates**, Penn State @52batesryan
 DT **Terry Beckner**, Missouri @beckner_jr
 DT **Ryan Bee**, Marshall.....@r_bee91
 G **David Beedle**, Michigan State.....@Big_Bug90
 OL **Beau Benzschawel**, Wisconsin..... @BeauBench
 C **Tyler Biadasz**, Wisconsin @TylerBiadasz
 OL **Lanard Bonner**, Arkansas State
 G **Tyler Bowling**, Tulsa.....@T_Bowling72
 C **Garrett Bradbury**, N.C. State @Gbradbury_11
 OL **Parker Braun**, Georgia Tech
 OL **Ben Bredeson**, Michigan
 DT **Derrick Brown**, Auburn.....@DerrickBrownAU5
 C **Jesse Burkett**, Stanford
 OL **Yodny Cajuste**, West Virginia.....@YC_Rich4Ever
 DT **Marquise Copeland**, Cincinnati@Be_Stezy_
 C **Deontae Crumitie**, Troy.....@deontaecrumitie
 OL **Michael Deiter**, Wisconsin.....@MichaelDeiter
 OL **Tommy Doles**, Northwestern.....@TommyDoles
 OL **O'Shea Dugas**, Louisiana Tech.....@Osheadugas
 C **Alec Eberle**, Florida State@aleceberle54
 OL **David Edwards**, Wisconsin.....@d_edwards79
 OL **Bobby Evans**, Oklahoma.....@BobbyEvans44
 C **Justin Falcinelli**, Clemson@Jfalc50
 C **Lo Falemaka**, Utah.....@peterfalemaka
 OL **Hjalte Froholdt**, Arkansas@HFroholdt
 C **Lamont Gaillard**, Georgia
 DT **Greg Gaines**, Washington@GregGaines99
 C **Tyler Gauthier**, Miami
 DT **Youhanna Ghaifan**, Wyoming.....@yogaifhan81
 C **Jake Hanson**, Oregon.....@J_Hanson55
 OL **Phil Haynes**, Wake Forest@PhilHaynes95
 G **Nate Herbig**, Stanford@nate_herbig
 DT **Trysten Hill**, UCF
 OT **Mitch Hyatt**, Clemson@themitchhyatt
 OL **Martez Ivey**, Florida@tezeyey
 C **Jordan Johnson**, UCF

DT **Dre'Mont Jones**, Ohio State@TheOfficial_80
 OL **Michael Jordan**, Ohio State@BigMikeJ73
 OL **Luke Juriga**, Western Michigan.....@Luke_Juriga56
 C **John Keenoy**, Western Michigan.....@Keenoy_52
 OL **Marcus Keyes**, Oklahoma State
 C **Sean Krepsz**, Nevada@Skrepsz
 DT **Dexter Lawrence**, Clemson.....@llawrence2139
 G **Jimmy Leatiota**, Eastern Michigan
 DT **Ira Lewis**, Baylor
 DT **Ray Lima**, Iowa State
 OL **Chris Lindstrom**, Boston College@Big_Fish68
 OL **Greg Little**, Ole Miss.....@Thegreglittle
 C **Toa Lobendahn**, USC.....@T_Lo55
 OL **Joe Lowery**, Ohio.....@thejlow_65
 OL **Kaleb McGary**, Washington.....@steelers47kaleb
 C **Connor McGovern**, Penn State.....@Condor_McGovern
 OL **Patrick Mekari**, California@PattM5997
 C **Chandler Miller**, Tulsa
 DT **David Moe**, Boise State@moaconstrictor_
 C **Sam Mustipher**, Notre Dame.....@smustipher53
 C **Will Noble**, Houston@W_Noble
 OT **Marcus Norman**, USF@MarcusNorman77
 DT **Ed Oliver**, Houston@Edoliver_11
 C **Ross Pierschbacher**, Alabama@RossP71
 OL **Ben Powers**, Oklahoma@BigBen_72
 OL **Isaiah Prince**, Ohio State.....@ThePrince_59
 OL **Dalton Risner**, Kansas State@DaltonBigD71
 NT **Olive Sagapolu**, Wisconsin.....@OSagapolu
 OL **Dru Samia**, Oklahoma@DruSamia
 OT **Max Scharping**, NIU@MaxScharping
 DT **Jordon Scott**, Oregon
 DT **Jeffery Simmons**, Mississippi State ...@GrindSimmons94
 OL **Trey Smith**, Tennessee@smithtrey98
 OL **Trevon Tate**, Memphis@_TopSh0tta
 OL **Calvin Throckmorton**, Oregon.....@calthrock_54
 DT **Jerry Tillery**, Notre Dame.....@JerryTillery
 OL **Patrick Vahe**, Texas.....@PatrickVahe
 DT **Ricky Walker**, Virginia Tech
 DT **Christian Wilkins**, Clemson.....@cwilkins42
 OL **Jonah Williams**, Alabama@JonahGWilliams
 DT **Daniel Wise**, Kansas

By conference: American Athletic 9; ACC 12; Big 12 11; Big Ten 13; Conference USA 2; Mid-American 5; Mountain West 3; Pac-12 11; SEC 11; Sun Belt 2; Independents 3.

KEY DATES:

- Semifinalists: Wed., Nov. 14 (The Old Mattress Factory, Omaha, Neb.)
- Finalists: Tues., Nov. 20 (ESPN)
- Winner: Thurs., Dec. 6 (*The Home Depot College Football Awards* on ESPN)
- Award Banquet: Wed., Jan. 19 (Downtown DoubleTree Hotel, Omaha, Neb.)

ALL NCAA DIVISION I FBS INTERIOR LINEMEN ARE ELIGIBLE TO WIN THE OUTLAND TROPHY

