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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## 2016 BRONKO NAGURSKI TROPHY FINALISTS NAMED

**DALLAS (FWAA)** – Five finalists have been chosen for the **2016 Bronko Nagurski Trophy**, which is awarded annually to the best defensive player in college football by the **Football Writers Association of America** and the **Charlotte Touchdown Club**.

The finalists, in alphabetical order, are: Alabama end **Jonathan Allen**, Alabama linebacker **Reuben Foster**, Florida State cornerback **Tarvarus McFadden**, Michigan linebacker **Jabrill Peppers** and Clemson end **Christian Wilkins**.

Top-ranked and unbeaten Alabama has a Bronko Nagurski Trophy finalist for the sixth straight year and for the seventh time in eight years. Clemson has a finalist for the second straight year. Florida State's last finalist was in 2013 and Michigan's in 2006.

Clemson has had one previous winner, Da'Quan Bowers in 2010. And Michigan's Charles Woodson was the 1997 winner during the same season in which he collected the Heisman Trophy. Both Alabama and Florida State will be seeking a winner for the first time this year.

The Bronko Nagurski Trophy winner will be chosen from these five finalists, who are part of the 2016 FWAA All-America Team. The FWAA All-America Committee, after voting input from the association's entire membership, selected the Nagurski Trophy finalists and will choose the winner.

Allen, a 6-3, 291-pound senior from Leesburg, Va., and Foster, a 6-1, 228-pound senior from Auburn, Ala., are two of the standouts on Alabama's defense, which is one of the best in the country. The Crimson Tide ranks No. 1 in the FBS in rushing defense (68.8 yards allowed per game), and No. 2 in both scoring defense (12.2 points per game allowed) and in total defense (259.5 yards allowed per game).

Allen, who is tied for second place on the Crimson Tide's career sack list with 25, has 7.5 sacks for 55 yards in losses this season. He has 13 quarterback hurries, has broken up two passes, and blocked a kick. He has scored touchdowns on two fumble recoveries – a 75-yard return against Mississippi and a 30-yard return against Texas A&M.

Foster is Alabama's leading tackler with 70 tackles (35 unassisted). Along with Allen, he also has started all 10 games this season. Foster has seven tackles for 29 yards in losses, two of which are sacks. He has two passes broken up and four quarterback hurries.

McFadden, a 6-2, 198-pound sophomore cornerback from Fort Lauderdale, Fla., leads the country with seven interceptions. He is the first Seminole with seven interceptions since 1997 and is already tied for the fourth highest interception total by an FSU player in a single season. He also chips in 14 tackles (11 unassisted), three tackles for 12 yards in losses and four passes broken up for the Seminoles (7-3).

Michigan's Peppers, a 6-1, 205-pound junior linebacker from East Orange, N.J., who plays some defensive back, has played 13 different positions during the 2016 season. But he is the star of the defense that ranks No. 1 in the country in scoring defense (allowing 11.0 ppg), in total defense (allowing 244.7 yards per game) and in passing defense (allowing 131.6 yards per game). Peppers is the season's second-leading tackler on the team with 59 (14 of which have been for 63 yards in losses). He has a forced fumble and eight quarterback hurries for the once-beaten Wolverines.

Wilkins, a 6-4, 310-pound sophomore end from Springfield, Mass., is one of the defensive stalwarts for the Tigers, who have lost only to Pittsburgh. He plays more end than tackle. Over the course of the season he has made 45 tackles (33 unassisted). He has a team-leading 11 tackles for 47 yards in losses, 3.5 of which are sacks. He has also recovered a fumble and blocked a kick for Clemson, which ranks 12th in FBS in scoring defense (18.4 points allowed per game.)



The annual Bronko Nagurski Trophy Banquet, presented by ACN, will be held on Mon., Dec. 5, at the Charlotte Convention Center. In addition to the 2016 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. Navy's Chet Moeller, a member of the FWAA's 1975 All-America Team and a College Football Hall of Famer, will be honored. Duke head coach David Cutcliffe will be the keynote speaker at the banquet.

The FWAA has chosen a National Defensive Player of the Year since 1993. In 1995, the FWAA 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 **Football Writers Association of America**, founded in 1941, consists of 1,400 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.

The Bronko Nagurski Trophy is a member of the **National College Football Awards Association (NCFAA)** which encompasses the most prestigious awards in college football. The 22 awards boast more than 700 years of tradition-selection excellence. Visit [ncfaa.org](http://ncfaa.org) to learn more about our story.

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