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For Immediate Release

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## VILLANOVA'S BRUNSON WINS 2017-18 OSCAR ROBERTSON TROPHY

**SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS (USBWA)** – Villanova junior guard **Jalen Brunson** has been named the winner of the **Oscar Robertson Trophy** as the National Player of the Year in voting by the **U.S. Basketball Writers Association**.

The trophy's namesake, "The Big O," was on hand at the Alamodome, site of this weekend's Final Four, to announce Brunson as the winner. The formal presentation of the award will take place at the College Basketball Awards dinner April 9 at the Missouri Athletic Club in St. Louis. In addition to the Oscar Robertson Trophy, other awards to be presented at the sold-out event are the Henry Iba Award for National Coach of the Year to Virginia's Tony Bennett, and the Wayman Tisdale Award for the National Freshman Player of the Year to Oklahoma's Trae Young. Former Missouri and Hall of Fame coach Norm Stewart and retired referee Ed Hightower each will receive lifetime achievement awards.



"Jalen Brunson is the most essential force on a terrific Villanova team, both a team player and dynamic individual talent," USBWA president Vahé Gregorian of The Kansas City Star said. "The USBWA is delighted to recognize him as our player of the year."

This is the first time a Villanova player has won the Oscar Robertson Trophy. A consensus All-America selection and the USBWA's District II Player of the Year, Brunson is a composite of a celebrated student-athlete. The 6-3 guard from Lincolnshire, Ill., led the Wildcats to a 27-4 regular-season record and a No. 1 seed in the NCAA Tournament, averaging 19.1 points and 4.8 assists per game. His season shooting percentage is at 52.7 percent going into the Final Four, and he shoots 41.4 percent from three-point range. On the season, Brunson had 176 assists against only 67 turnovers, and he has scored in double-figures in every game for a team that never left the top-five of the national rankings.

Brunson was the Big East Player of the Year, becoming the third Villanova guard in the last five seasons to win the award, and has his team on the cusp of a second national championship in three seasons. He is the first Villanova player to score 700 or more points in a season (729) since Kerry Kittles in the 1994-95 season.

He was a freshman starter on Villanova's 2016 national title team, averaging 9.6 points, and the former McDonald's All-American out of Adlai Stevenson High School has built a tremendous career since. Brunson is fresh off being named the 2018 NCAA East Regional's Most Outstanding Player after averaging 21.0 points, 4.0 rebounds and 4.0 assists in wins over Radford, Alabama, West Virginia and Texas Tech that earned the Wildcats a berth in the Final Four.

Against Texas Tech in the Elite Eight, Brunson scored a team-high 15 points to go with four assists. He scored 27 points playing against former AAU teammate Jevon Carter in Villanova's 90-78 win over West Virginia in their Sweet 16 matchup.

Brunson was also the Big East Scholar-Athlete of the Year. The College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA) named Brunson as a second-team Academic All-American. Brunson carries a 3.34 grade-point average as a communications major.

Brunson is the second USBWA national player of the year from a Big East Conference school in the past five years (Doug McDermott of Creighton won in the 2013-14 season), but only the fourth overall. Chris Mullin and Walter Berry, both of St. John's, earned USBWA honors in back-to-back seasons in 1984-85 and 1985-86.

The **Oscar Robertson Trophy** is voted on by the entire membership of the association, which consists of more than 900 journalists. It is the nation's oldest award and the only one named after a former player. The legendary Oscar Robertson was the USBWA's first player of the year in 1959 and was the consensus national player of the year as a sophomore in 1958, the year before USBWA started giving its player of the year award. The USBWA renamed the award the Oscar Robertson Trophy in 1998.

The **U.S. Basketball Writers Association** was formed in 1956 at the urging of then-NCAA Executive Director Walter Byers. Today, it is one of the most influential organizations in college basketball. For more information on the USBWA and its award programs, contact executive director Joe Mitch at 314-795-6821.