



NEWS RELEASE

Oklahoma Sports Hall of Fame and Jim Thorpe Association Proudly Reveal the Paycom Jim Thorpe Award 2025 Preseason Watch List

2025-07-30

OKLAHOMA CITY--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Today, Oklahoma Sports Hall of Fame (OSHOFF) and Jim Thorpe Association released the prestigious Paycom Jim Thorpe Award Preseason Watch List. This list includes 35 of the nation's best defensive backs, representing nine conferences and one independent university. The preseason watch list is selected by a screening committee whose members compile a list of up to 50 players based on previous performance in NCAA Division I college football and preseason All-America lists. This list is not final, and players who have outstanding seasons may be added to the semifinalists and finalists lists as the season progresses.

Today, Oklahoma Sports Hall of Fame (OSHOFF) and Jim Thorpe Association released the prestigious Paycom Jim Thorpe Award Preseason Watch List.

**2025 Paycom Jim Thorpe
Award Preseason Watch
List**

Xavion Alford, Safety, Arizona State, Sr.

Ty Benefield, Safety, Boise State, Jr.

KJ Bolden, Safety, Georgia, So.

Bud Clark, Safety, TCU, Sr.

Jeremiah Cooper, Safety, Iowa State, Sr.

Caleb Downs, Safety, Ohio State, Jr.

Daylen Everette, Cornerback, Georgia, Sr.

David Fisher, Cornerback, North Texas, Sr.

Chance Gamble, Cornerback, Georgia Southern, Sr.

Brylan Green, Safety, Liberty, Sr.
 Tyler Hallum, Cornerback, Kennesaw State, Sr.
 Al'zillion Hamilton, Cornerback, Fresno State, Sr.
 Davison Igbinosun, Cornerback, Ohio State, Sr.
 Casey Larkin, Safety, Army, Sr.
 A'Marion McCoy, Cornerback, Boise State, Sr.
 Jermod McCoy, Cornerback, Tennessee, Jr.
 Leonard Moore, Cornerback, Notre Dame, So.
 Terry Moore, Safety, Duke, Sr.
 Malik Muhammad, Cornerback, Texas, Jr.
 Isaiah Nwokobia, Safety, SMU, Sr.
 Tank Pearson, Cornerback, Ohio, Gr. Sr.
 Koi Perich, Safety, Minnesota, So.
 D'Angelo Ponds, Cornerback, Indiana, Jr.
 Chandler Rivers, Cornerback, Duke, Sr.
 De'Shawn Rucker, Cornerback, South Florida, Sr.
 Xavier Scott, Cornerback, Illinois, Sr.
 Tyree Skipper, Safety, Louisiana, Sr.
 Avery Smith, Cornerback, Toledo, Sr.
 Michael Taaffe, Safety, Texas, Sr.
 Avieon Terrell, Cornerback, Clemson, Jr.
 Dillon Thieneman, Safety, Oregon, Jr.
 Jacob Thomas, Safety, James Madison, Sr.
 DJ Walker, Safety, Ohio, So.
 JeRico Washington Jr., Cornerback, Kennesaw State, So.
 Jontez Williams, Cornerback, Iowa State, Jr.

By Conference

AAC (3), ACC (4), Big 12 (4), Big Ten (6), CUSA (3), Independent (1), MAC (3), MW (3), SEC (5), Sun Belt (3)

The Paycom Jim Thorpe Award is a member of the National College Football Awards Association (NCFAA), which encompasses college football's most prestigious awards. The NCFAA's 25 awards have honored more than 950 recipients since 1935. Visit [NCFAA.org](https://www.ncfaa.org) for more information.

Sixteen NCFAA members are unveiling preseason watch lists over a 15-day period as the association spearheads a coordinated effort to promote each award's preseason candidates. Following is the remaining 2025 preseason

watch list calendar:

Mon., July 28: Maxwell Award
 Tue., July 29: Outland Trophy/Bronko Nagurski Trophy
 Wed., July 30: Paycom Jim Thorpe Award/Butkus Award
 Thu., July 31: Paul Hornung Award/Allstate Wuerffel Trophy
 Fri., Aug. 1: Lou Groza Award/Ray Guy Award
 Mon., Aug. 4: Walter Camp Award
 Tue., Aug. 5: Doak Walker Award
 Wed., Aug. 6: Biletnikoff Award
 Thu., Aug. 7: Davey O'Brien Award
 Fri., Aug. 8: Mackey Award/Rimington Trophy
 Mon., Aug. 11: Bednarik Award

Paycom Jim Thorpe Award Important Dates

Wed., July 30: Preseason Watch List Announced at 11 a.m. CT/noon ET

Tue., Oct. 28: Semifinalists Announced at 11 a.m. CT/noon ET

A screening committee consisting of OSHOF members monitors all defensive backs throughout the season, including watch list players, and narrows the field to up to 15 semifinalists.

Tue., Nov. 25: Finalists Announced at 11 a.m. CT/noon ET

The three finalists are submitted to a national panel of over 250 sports writers, sportscasters, former players and coaches who vote to determine the winner of the Paycom Jim Thorpe Award.

Fri., Dec. 12: Winner Announced on The Home Depot College Football Awards

The winner will be announced on the ESPN live presentation of The Home Depot College Football Awards at 7 p.m. ET. Other recognized NCFAA awards announced include the Bednarik Award, Maxwell Award, Mackey Award, Rimington Trophy, Lou Groza Award, Ray Guy Award, Bronko Nagurski Award, Outland Trophy, Butkus Award, Lombardi Award, Biletnikoff Award, Davey O'Brien Award, Doak Walker Award, Walter Camp Award and others.

Tue., Feb. 10, 2026: Paycom Jim Thorpe Award Banquet Honoring the 2025 Winner in Oklahoma City

The official presentation of the Paycom Jim Thorpe Award takes place in Oklahoma City, following The Home Depot College Football Awards. The current winner and all former winners are invited each year to celebrate. Over 600 supporters attend the Paycom Jim Thorpe Award Banquet each year, including many celebrities and dignitaries.

For more information on the Paycom Jim Thorpe Award and past award recipients, please visit www.oklahomasportshalloffame.org.

2024 Paycom Jim Thorpe Award Winner Jahdae Barron, The University of Texas

Jahdae Barron attended John B. Connally High School in Austin, Texas, where he starred on the football and track and field teams. He was selected First-Team 5-A 11 All-District as a defensive back his junior season and earned Second-Team 5A All-State his senior year. In addition to defensive back, Barron also played wide receiver and returned kickoffs and punts for Connally. He finished his senior season at Connally as one of the highest rated defensive backs in the country and attended The University of Texas following high school.

Barron appeared in five games for the Texas Longhorns as a freshman. Barron saw more playing time as a sophomore, appearing in nine games and making two starts during the 2021 season. He came into his own as a junior, playing in 13 games and making nine starts. He was named honorable mention All-Big 12 and finished 2022 with 78 tackles, one sack, two interceptions and led Texas with 11.5 tackles for loss. Barron continued his excellence on the field in 2023. He was named a Paycom Jim Thorpe Award Semifinalist and selected Second-Team All-Big 12. He finished 2023 with 61 tackles (32 solo), one interception and six pass breakups.

Barron became the best defensive back in the country in 2024, winning the Paycom Jim Thorpe Award. Barron started all 16 games for the Longhorns in 2024. He led the SEC and finished fourth in the country with five interceptions. Barron was named First-Team All-America by the Associated Press and First-Team All-SEC. In addition to the Paycom Jim Thorpe Award, Barron was a finalist for the Bronko Nagurski Trophy and helped lead the Longhorns to a College Football Playoff (CFP) appearance. Barron had three solo tackles and two pass breakups in the opening round victory over Clemson. He was named the Chick-fil-A Peach Bowl Defensive MVP in the Longhorns' quarterfinal win against Arizona State as Texas advanced to the CFP Semifinals for a second straight season. Barron finished the 2024 season with 67 tackles, five interceptions, 11 pass breakups and one fumble recovery.

Jahdae Barron was selected by the Denver Broncos with the 20th overall pick in the first round of the 2025 NFL Draft.

The **Paycom Jim Thorpe Award** is awarded to the best defensive back in college football based on

performance on the field, athletic ability and character. The award was established in 1986 and is named after history's greatest all-around athlete, Jim Thorpe. Thorpe excelled as a running back, passer and kicker on the offensive side of the ball, but also stood out as a defensive back. In addition to his legendary performance on the football field, Thorpe played professional baseball and won Olympic gold medals in the decathlon and pentathlon. The Paycom Jim Thorpe Award is universally accepted as one of the nation's top collegiate sports honors.

Paycom Software, Inc. (NYSE: PAYC) ("Paycom"), a leading provider of comprehensive, cloud-based human capital management software, and the Jim Thorpe Museum and Oklahoma Sports Hall of Fame jointly announced in May 2017 an exclusive sponsorship of the Jim Thorpe Award. As a result, the accolade has been named the "Paycom Jim Thorpe Award."

Olivia James

Marketing Communications & Event Director

Oklahoma Sports Hall of Fame

ojames@oksportshof.org

Source: Paycom Software, Inc.