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For Immediate Release
August 18, 2026

2026 Doak Walker Award Candidates Announced

DALLAS — The PwC SMU Athletic Forum released today the preseason candidates for the 2026 Doak Walker Award. The Forum annually presents the award to the nation's most outstanding college running back.

The list features 2025 Doak Walker Award finalist Ahmad Hardy (Missouri). Hardy rushed for 1,649 yards and 16 touchdowns, ranking second nationally in total rushing yards in 2025. The list also includes 2025 Doak Walker Award finalist Kewan Lacy (Ole Miss), who rushed for 1,567 yards and 24 touchdowns while helping the Rebels to a Sugar Bowl victory, and 2025 semifinalists Cam Cook (West Virginia), Cameron Dickey (Texas Tech) and Lucky Sutton (SDSU).

University athletic departments nominate candidates for the award and can continue to do so through October. The complete list of candidates is below.

Ajay Allen (Sr.), Western Kentucky
Jabari Bates (Sr.), San Jose State
Jadan Baugh (Jr.), Florida
Braydon Bennett (Sr.), Eastern Michigan
Vaughn Blue (Jr.), Central Michigan
Mel Brown (Sr.), Colorado State
Raleek Brown (Sr.), Texas
Kenyon Clay (Sr.), Arkansas State
Cam Cook (Sr.), West Virginia
Manny Covey (Jr.), Memphis
Kam Davis (So.), Liberty
Jordon Davison (So.), Oregon
Evan Dickens (Jr.), Boston College
Cameron Dickey (Jr.), Texas Tech
Cam Edwards (Sr.), Michigan State
Dylan Edwards (Jr.), Kansas
Leonard Farrow (Sr.), Florida Atlantic
Mark Fletcher Jr. (Sr.), Miami
Matt Fuller (So.), South Carolina
Ashton Grey (Jr.), East Carolina
Carson Hansen (Sr.), Penn State
Ahmad Hardy (Jr.), Missouri
Samuel Harris (So.), Wyoming
Caleb Hawkins (So.), Oklahoma State
Marcellous Hawkins (Sr.), Virginia Tech
Justice Haynes (Sr.), Georgia Tech
Malachi Hosley (Sr.), Georgia Tech
Makhi Hughes (Sr.), Houston
Fame Ijeboi (So.), Purdue
Bo Jackson (So.), Ohio State
Telly Johnson Jr. (Jr.), NIU

Peyton Jones (Jr.), Liberty
Demon June (Fr.), North Carolina
Wayne Knight (Sr.), UCLA
Ousmane Kromah (So.), Florida State
Kewan Lacy (Jr.), Ole Miss
Peyton Lewis (Jr.), Virginia
Khobie Martin (So.), Indiana
CJ Miller (Jr.), Toledo
Adam Mohammed (Jr.), California
Kamari Moulton (Jr.), Iowa
AJ Newberry (Jr.), Oregon State
Godspower Nwawuihe (So.), Army
James Peoples (Jr.), Penn State
George Pettaway (Sr.), James Madison
Kendrick Raphael (Sr.), SMU
Kedrick Reescano (Sr.), Arizona
Turbo Richard (Jr.), Indiana
Devin Roche (Jr.), Old Dominion
Jayden Scott (So.), NC State
Sutton Smith (Sr.), Arkansas
Hollywood Smothers (Jr.), Texas
Lucky Sutton (Sr.), SDSU
Herschel Turner (Jr.), Nevada
Kanye Udoh (Sr.), Liberty
Ca'Lil Valentine (Jr.), Illinois
Duke Watson (Jr.), UCF
Jahiem White (Sr.), North Texas
DeJuan Williams (So.), Maryland
Yasin Willis (Jr.), Kansas
Quintrevion Wisner (Sr.), Florida State
Richard Young (Sr.), Colorado

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The PwC SMU Athletic Forum Board of Directors will name ten semifinalists in November, and three finalists, as voted on by the Doak Walker Award National Selection Committee, will also be announced in November. The committee will cast a second vote in December to determine the recipient. The National Selection Committee consists of past recipients, former NFL All-Pro and college All-America running backs, media members and selected special representatives. The recipient of the 2026 Doak Walker Award will be announced live on *The Home Depot College Football Awards* on December 10, 2026.

The award is named for SMU's three-time All-America running back Doak Walker. Each Tuesday of this season, The PwC SMU Athletic Forum will once again announce a Doak Walker National Running Back of the week.

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Honoring the legends of sports for 37 years, the PwC SMU Athletic Forum celebrates outstanding success in athletics. Based in Dallas, the series features major figures from a variety of sports. The PwC SMU Athletic Forum hosts a series of yearly receptions and the prestigious Doak Walker Award Presentation Banquet.

The Doak Walker 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 nearly 1,000 recipients since 1935. This season, 12 NCFAA awards will honor national players of the week each Tuesday.

Sixteen NCFAA members are unveiling preseason watch lists over a three-week period as the association spearheads a coordinated effort to promote each award's preseason candidates. Following is the remaining 2026 preseason watch list calendar:

*Wed., Aug. 19: Biletnikoff Award
Thu., Aug. 20: Davey O'Brien Award
Fri., Aug. 21: Bednarik Award*

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