

Presley, Fletcher, Smith and LeGree finalists for National Awards

Written by Mike Kelly

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Quarterback DeAndre Presley, linebacker D.J. Smith, defensive lineman Jabari Fletcher and defensive back Mark LeGree of Appalachian State are finalists for two national awards.

Presley, who set the world on fire to start the season, is a finalist for the Walter Payton Award, which goes to the best offensive player in the country in the Football Championship Series Division. In his first season as a starter, Presley has guided ASU to nine wins, its sixth consecutive Southern Conference championship and its sixth straight appearance in the FCS playoffs.

The junior from Tampa, FL has amassed 2,976 yards offensively (753 on the ground and 2,223 through the air) and he's responsible for 29 touchdowns. He was also named SoCon Offensive Player of the Week four times and he was also named the SoCon Offensive Player of the Month for September.

Fletcher, who won back-to-back defensive player of the week honors and was also named the SoCon Defensive Player of the Month in October, is a finalist for the Buck Buchanan Award, which goes to the best defensive player in the country at the FCS level. Fletcher has 52 tackles, 12 tackles-for-loss, seven quarterback sacks, an interception, four fumble recoveries (one he returned for his first career touchdown) and a forced fumble in 11 games.

Smith, who had 14 tackles, including 12 solo stops on Saturday against Florida, moving him into second place on the school's all-time list behind Dexter Coakley, is also a Buchanan finalists. Smith leads ASU with 122 tackles, three tackles-for-loss, an interception and a fumble recovery in 11 games. And LeGree, who sat out the regular-season finale at Florida with a thigh injury, is on that list of finalists as well.

LeGree, who has been a finalist for this award the last two seasons, has 42 tackles and five interceptions in ten games. The two-time All-American has picked off 22 passes in his career. The award winners will be announced at the national awards banquet on Thursday, Jan. 6 in Frisco, Texas - the night before the national championship game. ASU, the No.1 seed in the FCS playoffs, has a bye this week. The Mountaineers will play the winner of Coastal Carolina and Western Illinois at Kidd Brewer Stadium on December 4.

It will be a 12-noon kick-off and our coverage begins at 10 am on AM 1450, WATA.

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