

Presley Invited to Payton Ceremony

Written by Mike Flynn

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Appalachian State University quarterback DeAndre Presley (Tampa, Fla./Middleton) has been invited to The Sports Network's 24th-annual NCAA Division I FCS Awards Presentation as one of the top three vote-getters for the 2010 Walter Payton Award.

The winner of the Payton Award, which is presented to the nation's top FCS player, will be announced at the banquet on Jan. 6, 2011 in Frisco, Texas.

The other two players invited to join Presley for the announcement of the Payton Award winner are Western Illinois senior quarterback Matt Barr (3,312 passing yards, 26 touchdowns, seven interceptions) and Stephen F. Austin senior quarterback Jeremy Moses (3,658 yds., 34 TD, 4 INT).

Ironically, the next two weekends could both feature matchups between two of the three remaining candidates. Presley and Barr square off on Saturday when top-seeded Appalachian (9-2) hosts Western Illinois (8-4) in the second round of the NCAA Division I Football Championship. Should Moses and SFA (9-2) survive this weekend's second-round game versus Villanova, they would face the winner of the ASU-WIU matchup in the national quarterfinals.

In his first season as ASU's starting quarterback and one year removed from spending most of the 2009 campaign playing wide receiver, Presley accounted for 2,976 yards of total offense (2,223 passing, 753 rushing) and 29 touchdowns (18 passing, 11 rushing) during the regular season. The junior ranks among the nation's top 15 in points responsible for (180 — t-eighth), passing efficiency (148.26 — ninth) and total offense (13th) and is the only player among the Southern Conference's top five performers in both passing (third) and rushing (fourth). Last week, he was named the SoCon's Offensive Player of the Year by the league's coaches and media.

Presley's invitation marks the fourth time in seven seasons that a Mountaineer has finished among the top three in Payton Award balloting. Wide receiver DaVon Fowlkes placed third in

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voting in 2004 and quarterback Armanti Edwards became the only two-time winner in the 23-year history of the award by earning the honor in 2008 and 2009.

In addition to the Payton Award, the Buck Buchanan (FCS defensive player of the year) and Eddie Robinson (FCS coach of the year) awards will also be presented at the banquet on Jan. 6. ASU has three representatives on the 20-player ballot for the Buchanan Award in defensive end Jabari Fletcher (Atlanta, Ga./Grady), defensive back Mark LeGree (Columbus, Ga./Pacelli Catholic) and linebacker D.J. Smith (Charlotte, N.C./Independence) while head coach Jerry Moore is one of 20 candidates for the Robinson Award.