Written by Mike Flynn
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Appalachian State University quarterback Jamal Jackson (Atlanta, Ga./North Atlanta) has been added to the official 20-player watch list for the 2012 Walter Payton Award, The Sports Network announced on Tuesday. The Walter Payton Award is the NCAA Division I Football Championship Subdivision equivalent of the Heisman Trophy. The 26th-annual Payton Award will be voted on next week by a nationwide media panel with the winner announced on Dec. 17 in Philadelphia.

Jackson ranks among the nation's top 30 in virtually every category for a quarterback with 2,905 passing yards (ninth - 264.1 ypg), 3,239 yards of total offense (12th - 294.5 ypg), a 146.2 pass-efficiency rating (18th), 235 completions (22nd - 21.4 pg) and 144 points responsible for (29th - 13.1 pg) and leads the Southern Conference in passing yardage and total offense.

The junior is also on the verge of nearly every single-season passing record in Appalachian State history, needing just 386 yards, 22 completions, one 200-yard game and two 300-yard games to match the school record in each category. The current Appalachian records of 3,291 passing yards, 257 completions and 10 200-yard passing games were all set by Armanti Edwards when he won the second of his two Walter Payton Awards in 2009. Edwards remains as the only two-time winner in the 26-year history of the award.

Jackson's inclusion on the latest official watch list almost certainly assures that at least one Mountaineer will be a Payton Award finalist for the ninth-straight year.

In addition to Jackson, Appalachian State linebacker Jeremy Kimbrough (Decatur, Ga./Cedar Grove) and cornerback Demetrius McCray (Covington, Ga./Newton) are on The Sports Network's official watch list for the 2012 Buck Buchanan Award (FCS Defensive Player of the Year) and wide receiver Sean Price (Reston, Va./South Lakes) is widely considered as a frontrunner for the 2012 Jerry Rice Award (FCS Freshman of the Year). Like the Payton Award, the Buchanan and Rice Awards will be presented on Dec. 17 in Philadelphia.

Photo Courtesy: Jamal Jackson, ASU Athletics