

Presley, Breitenstein On Payton Watch List

Written by Mike Kelly
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Appalachian State quarterback DeAndre Presley and Wofford College running back Eric Breitenstein are on the Walter Payton Award watch list.

The Payton Award goes to the best offensive player in the nation at the Football Sub-Division Championship Series level. Presley, a senior, did a marvelous job replacing Armanti Edwards at quarterback for the Mountaineers last fall. The end result, Presley led ASU to ten wins and the NCAA Quarterfinals. He also put up some impressive numbers.

Presley, the Southern Conference Player of the Year, threw for 2,631 yards and 21 touchdowns; he ran for 1,039 yards and 13 touchdowns. And Presley was a one-man wrecking crew against Western Illinois in the second-round of the NCAA playoffs last season, when he rambled for 264 yards and two touchdowns on a snowy afternoon at Kidd Brewer Stadium. Presley, who finished third in the Payton Award voting last season, led the Mountaineers in rushing and passing. He finished second in scoring with 84 points behind kicker Jason Vitaris (88 points). Presley completed 61% of his passes, and he only threw seven interceptions in 343 pass attempts.

Breitenstein put up some big numbers as well for the Terriers. A two-time All-State selection during his prep days at Watauga High, Breitenstein, a red-shirt junior, ran for a school record 1,639 yards and 22 touchdowns last fall. He averaged more than six-yards-per-carry (6.1) and nearly 130 rushing yards-per-outing (126.1). And thanks to Breitenstein, the Terriers had the top rushing offense in the nation at the FCS level in 2010.

The list also includes Chattanooga quarterback B.J. Coleman, who led the Mocs to a 6-5 record last season. Coleman completed 56% of his passes last season and threw for 2,669 yards. He threw 26 touchdown passes, and he was intercepted 13 times in 382 pass attempts.

In all, six finalists return from last season headlining a stellar 20-player Watch List for the Football Championship Subdivision's top individual honor. The Payton Award will celebrate its 25th anniversary this season and be presented at the national awards banquet Thursday night, January 5 in Frisco, Texas.

The Payton Award Watch List will undergo a revision during the 2011 season. Ballots will be sent to a panel of about 200 sports information and media relations directors, broadcasters, writers and other dignitaries after the regular season on Nov. 21. Three finalists will be announced on Dec. 1 and invited to The Sports Network/Fathead FCS Awards Presentation. The Sports Network also presents the Buck Buchanan, Jerry Rice and Eddie Robinson awards which are sponsored by Fathead.com. The Buchanan Award honors the FCS defensive player of the year, the new Rice Award goes to the FCS freshman of the year and the Robinson Award, which also is celebrating its 25th anniversary, honors the FCS coach of the year. Those three winners will join the top three Payton finalists at the national awards banquet. The FCS National Championship Game will be played Friday, January 6 in Frisco, TX.

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