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TEN STANDOUT RUNNING BACKS NAMED SEMIFINALISTS FOR 2024 DOAK WALKER AWARD

List features three repeat semifinalists and four stars who earned national running back of the week honor during the season

DALLAS (SMU) – The **PwC SMU Athletic Forum** is proud to announce the 10 semifinalists for the **2024 Doak Walker National Collegiate Running Back Award**. Headed by four players from the Big 12 Conference and two Atlantic Coast Conference selections, the list of honored players includes three repeat semifinalists. The 10 semifinalists represent five Division I FBS conferences.

Three finalists for the 2024 Doak Walker Award will be announced a week from today and the winner will be unveiled live on ESPN during The Home Depot College Football Awards on Dec. 12. The formal presentation of the award will take place at the annual banquet scheduled for Jan. 31, 2025.

Here's a thumbnail look at the semifinalists, four of whom were honored during the course of the season as the Doak Walker Award National Running Back of the Week:

Tahj Brooks, Texas Tech: Brooks became Texas Tech's all-time leading rusher last weekend after a 137-yard effort last week pushed him past Byron Hanspard, the 1996 Doak Walker Award winner. Brooks, a returning semifinalist and one of four Big 12 backs among the 10-player list, is second in the league and eighth nationally in rushing (1,184 yards) and is one of only two players in the FBS to hit the 100-yard rushing mark in each game he has played this season. Brooks' next 100-yard rushing performance will mark the 22nd of his career, the most in school history. Hanspard (1996) and Byron "Bam" Morris (1993) are previous Doak Walker Award winners from Texas Tech.

DJ Giddens, Kansas State: Giddens is Kansas State's fourth player in school history with multiple 1,000-yard rushing seasons and currently lists fourth in the Big 12 at 1,128 yards, ninth nationally. A receiving threat as well, Giddens is 10th nationally in all-purpose yards per game (134.7) and seventh among backs without return yardage. Giddens paces a K-State ground game that is seventh in the nation averaging 5.8 yards per carry, on pace to break the school record of 5.27 from 2016.

Omarion Hampton, North Carolina: Fresh off career-highs of 244 rushing yards and 35 carries in a win over Wake Forest last week, Hampton returns as a semifinalist after reaching the finalist stage a year ago. Hampton, the Atlantic Coast Conference leader and second nationally with 1,422 yards, is just the third Tar Heel with three 200-rushing yard games in his career and is fifth all-time at UNC with 3,327 career rushing yards. He has rushed for over 100 yards in nine out of 10 games this season and eight straight contests, a UNC record.

RJ Harvey, UCF: The current rushing leader in a crowded field of top Big 12 Conference backs is tied for third in the FBS with 1,328 yards and powers the nation's second-best rushing attack (262.8 ypg). A semifinalist a year ago, Harvey's league-leading 19 touchdowns have him as the Big 12's scoring leader (128 points) by a 50-point margin above second place. He was the Doak Walker National Running Back of the Week honor for the Sept. 14 weekend, the first UCF player to earn it. Harvey's 40 career rushing touchdowns are second all-time at UCF.

Makhi Hughes, Tulane: Hughes has scored a touchdown in 11 straight games following a two-score outing in last week's win over Navy, his sixth multi-score game this season. The American Athletic Conference rushing leader has 1,291 yards, fifth nationally, and is 10th in the FBS in yards per game at 117.4. Hughes is the lynchpin workhorse of Tulane's run-based offense that is 8-0 this season when outrushing the opponent and 27-2 when doing so the past three seasons.

Ashton Jeanty, Boise State: The dynamic back leads the nation in rushing with 1,893 yards and is more than 450 yards ahead of second place. Jeanty earned the Doak Walker Award's Player of the Week award four times (Sept. 3, Oct. 1, Oct. 8 and Nov. 12), and with four 200-plus-yard games in tow, also leads the FBS in rushing yards per game (189.3), rushing touchdowns (26) and is third in attempts (256) and yards per carry (7.39). Jeanty (26 rushing, 1 receiving) has scored more total touchdowns (27) this season than 25 FBS teams.

Kaleb Johnson, Iowa: Johnson is at 1,328 yards, tied for third in the nation and the seventh-most in Iowa's single-season history and climbing. He is tied for second in the FBS in total touchdowns (21) and last week scored his 20th rushing touchdown to tie 2008 Doak Walker Award winner Shonn Green's school record. Iowa's all-time single-season scoring leader (126 pts., 3rd in FBS) is a big-play back. The Doak Walker National Running Back of the Week for the weekend of Sept. 21



averages 7.06 yards per carry, sixth nationally, and has 20 rushes of 20-plus yards and nine scoring runs of 25-plus yards. Iowa is the Big Ten rushing leader at 208.1 yards per game.

Dylan Sampson, Tennessee: The Southeastern Conference rushing leader at 1,260 yards – ahead of second place by 215 yards – has scored a Tennessee-record 21 rushing touchdowns this season, another SEC best, tied for second in the FBS, and the sixth-best mark in SEC single-season history. His 123.0 yards per game also leads the SEC and is seventh in the FBS. Sampson ties Iowa's Johnson with 126 points and ties for third in the FBS and has nine 100-yard games this season. He's only the second Tennessee player to have a rushing touchdown in eight straight games.

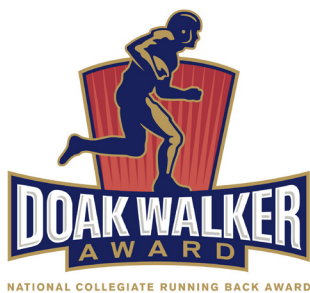
Cam Skattebo, Arizona State: The Big 12's third-leading rusher in a crowd at the top has 1,074 yards (11th in FBS) and averages 119.3 yards per game. Skattebo topped the 100-yard all-purpose mark last week in a win over Kansas State, the seventh time to do so this season and 12th time he's topped the century mark in his 21 games at ASU, also passing 5,000 career all-purpose yards (now 5,099) during the game. His 121 receiving yards against Oklahoma State and 117 against Texas Tech are the 4th- and 6th-most receiving yards by an FBS halfback this season. He's one of just 15 FBS running backs since 1996 to rush for over 150 yards and receive for 100 yards in a game. Skattebo was the Doak Walker National Running Back of the Week in each month on the weekends of Sept. 7, Oct. 12 and Nov. 2.

Brashard Smith, SMU: The ACC's third-leading rusher is only the 12th SMU player to have a 1,000-yard season (1,026) and is fresh off his sixth 100-yard game of the season in SMU's win over Boston College. Smith's 1,470 all-purpose yards (147.0 per game) are sixth nationally and list 12th in a season at SMU. He has topped the 100-yard all-purpose mark in nine of 10 games and is one of just seven FBS players with 1,000 rushing and 200-plus receiving yards on the season. He also has 243 kickoff return yards, making him the only player in the FBS with 1,000-plus rushing, 200-plus receiving and 200-plus kickoff return yards this year.

The Doak Walker Award presented by the PwC SMU Athletic Forum has been awarded to the nation's top running back since 1990.

The Doak Walker Award is a member of the National College Football Awards Association. Founded in 1997, the NCFAA includes college football's most prestigious awards and its 24 awards have honored more than 900 recipients dating back to 1935. For more information about the NCFAA and its award programs, visit the redesigned [NCFAA.org](https://www.ncfaa.org) or follow on X at [@NCFAA](https://twitter.com/NCFAA).

For more information on the Doak Walker Award, contact Jeff Lockhart (lockhart@smu.edu) at the PwC SMU Athletic Forum, visit smu.edu/doakwalkeraward and follow on X at [@DoakWalkerAward](https://twitter.com/DoakWalkerAward).



2024 DOAK WALKER NATIONAL RUNNING BACKS OF THE WEEK

- Week 1 (Aug. 31) Ashton Jeanty, Boise State
- Week 2 (Sept. 7) Cam Skattebo, Arizona State
- Week 3 (Sept. 14) RJ Harvey, UCF
- Week 4 (Sept. 21) Kaleb Johnson, Iowa
- Week 5 (Sept. 28) Ashton Jeanty, Boise State
- Week 6 (Oct. 5) Ashton Jeanty, Boise State
- Week 7 (Oct. 12) Cam Skattebo, Arizona State
- Week 8 (Oct. 19) Bhayshul Tuten, Virginia Tech
- Week 9 (Oct. 26) Jarquesz Hunter, Auburn
- Week 10 (Nov. 2) Cam Skattebo, Arizona State
- Week 11 (Nov. 9) Ashton Jeanty, Boise State

2024 DOAK WALKER AWARD PRESEASON CANDIDATES LIST

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|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Kaytron Allen, Penn State | DJ Giddens, Kansas State | Jaquez Moore, Duke |
| LeQuint Allen, Syracuse | Ollie Gordon II, Oklahoma State | Devin Neal, Kansas |
| Mario Anderson, Memphis | Rodney Hammond Jr., Pitt | Nate Noel, Missouri |
| Kevorian Barnes, UTSA | Omarion Hampton, North Carolina | Cam Porter , Northwestern |
| CJ Baxter, Texas | T.J. Harden, UCLA | Jadarian Price, Notre Dame |
| Lee Beebe Jr., UAB | Rahjai Harris, East Carolina | Kanye Roberts, App State |
| Ulysses Bentley IV, Ole Miss | RJ Harvey, UCF | Kye Robichaux, Boston College |
| Jaydon Blue, Texas | Justice Haynes, Alabama | Abu Sama III, Iowa State |
| Tahj Brooks, Texas Tech | Jamal Haynes, Georgia Tech | Dylan Sampson, Tennessee |
| Antario Brown, NIU | Roman Hemby, Maryland | Raheim Sanders, South Carolina |
| Jalen Buckley, Western Michigan | TreVeyon Henderson, Ohio State | Gavin Sawchuk, Oklahoma |
| Ryan Butler, Stanford | Daniel Hishaw Jr., Kansas | Malik Sherrod, Fresno State |
| CJ Campbell Jr., Florida Atlantic | Jarquez Hunter, Auburn | Nicholas Singleton, Penn State |
| Marcus Carroll, Missouri | Jordan James, Oregon | Cam Skattebo, Arizona State |
| Nathan Carter, Michigan State | Ashton Jeanty, Boise State | Terion Stewart, Bowling Green |
| Donald Chaney, Louisville | Montrell Johnson Jr., Florida | Darius Taylor, Minnesota |
| Demond Claiborne, Wake Forest | Quinshon Judkins, Ohio State | Alex Tecza, Navy |
| Dean Connors, Rice | Jaylan Knighton , SMU | Jai'Den Thomas, UNLV |
| Quinton Cooley, Liberty | Jeremiyah Love, Notre Dame | DeaMonte Trayanum, Kentucky |
| Marquez Cooper, San Diego State | Marion Lukes, Central Michigan | Bhayshul Tuten, Virginia Tech |
| Marquis Crosby, Louisiana Tech | Phil Mafah, Clemson | Kayne Udoh, Army |
| Jacory Croskey-Merritt, Arizona | Woody Marks, USC | Dre'lyn Washington, Louisiana |
| Ja'Quez Cross, Arkansas State | LJ Martin, BYU | Jordan Waters , NC State |
| Sean Dollars, Nevada | Damien Martinez, Miami | Harrison Waylee, Wyoming |
| CJ Donaldson Jr., West Virginia | Josh McCray, Illinois | Jahiem White, West Virginia |
| Donovan Edwards, Michigan | Chez Mellusi , Wisconsin | Noah Whittington, Oregon |
| Trevor Etienne, Georgia | Jam Miller, Alabama | Leshon Williams, Iowa |
| Rahsul Faison, Utah State | Devin Mockobee, Purdue | Nay'Quan Wright , South Florida |
| Kaden Feagin, Illinois | Kyle Monangai, Rutgers | Elijah Young, WKU |



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