



# THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF AFRICAN AMERICAN ATHLETES

A 501 c 3 Non-Profit Organization

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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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## African American Scholar Athletes Receive Top Honors

Washington, DC (January 3, 2019) – On **Saturday, March 9, 2019, at 6:00 p.m.**, the National Alliance of African American Athletes (The Alliance) will recognize another stellar group of high school athletes from across the nation for the **Franklin D. Watkins Memorial Award**. The award is presented each year to the nation's top African American male high school scholar athlete.

The six finalists in alphabetical order are:

\* Jaylen Coleman, Charlotte, NC, Porter Ridge High School, - 4.3 GPA: National Honors Society, Mu Alpha Theta Mathematic Honor Society, National Beta Club, Charlotte High School Leadership Award, Volunteer for Matthews Help Center, Volunteer for Fuel Up to Play 60, Member of Heels of Success, Student Council & UNC Renaissance Program, Appalachia Prep Best Running Back, Charlotte Game of the Week MVP, Union County Board of Education Athletic Award, Charlotte Touchdown Club Award, Blue Grey All American, North Carolina 4A 100 meter champion, North Carolina All Conference for Football and Track & Field.

\* Nicolas Cross, Washington, DC, DeMatha Catholic High School – 3.7 GPA: Member of the National Honors Society, 4 Year Honor Roll Student, Principal's Dean's List, Academic Award for House Perfect, Volunteer for Homeless, Church Volunteer, Volunteer at Orphanage in Peru, Summer School Counselor, 2X First Team All WCAC, The Opening Finalist, Polynesian Bowl All Star, Hall of Fame All American, ESPN 300, Rivals Top 100, WCAC Champion, Maryland Gatorade Player of the Year, All Metropolitan Honorable Mention Track & Field.

\* Nakobe Dean, Horn Lake MS, Horn Lake High School – 4.3 GPA: Member of the National Honors Society, Youth Mentor, Volunteer for Toys for Tots, Volunteer for Homeless Shelter, Community Clean Up, Volunteer for Mississippi elementary schools, Regional Player of the Year, Mississippi/Alabama All Star, SES Mississippi Elite 10, 1<sup>st</sup> Team All State, Mississippi Mr. Football, High School Butkus Award, Bobby Dodd Award, Mississippi Gatorade Player of the Year, and Under Armour Football All American.

\* Aeneas DiCosmo, Montclair, NJ, Bergen Catholic High School – 4.1 GPA: Member of the National Honors Society, Hoby Scholar, Volunteer for Camp Sunshine, Volunteer for Crusader Camp, Writer for School Bergen Newspaper, Member of Student Council, New Jersey All Conference, New Jersey 2<sup>nd</sup> Team All State.

\* Elijah Higgins, Austin, TX, James Bowie High School – 4.1 GPA: 1<sup>st</sup> Team All Academics, Trustee Academic Award, 1<sup>st</sup> Team District Academics, African American Heritage Academic Award, Youth Grove Leader, Polynesian Bowl All American, 1<sup>st</sup> Team All District, and Under Armour Football All American.

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“Empowerment Through Education and Athletics”



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\* Roschon Johnson, Port Neches, TX, Port Neches-Groves High School – 4.0 GPA: Member of the National Honors Society, 4 Year High School Perfect Attendance, Volunteer Hurricane Harvey, Volunteer Calvary Youth Ministries, Peer Tutor, Elite 11, Conference Football MVP, Willie Ray Smith Award, Beaumont Enterprise Super Gold, District MVP, Port Arthur News Super Team MVP, District Offensive Player of the Year, Associated Press All State, and Under Armour Football All American.

## **The Watkins Award ceremony will be held at the prestigious Crystal City Hilton, Arlington, VA**

"This year's 2019 Watkins Award features an incredible collection of fine student athletes," Everette Pearsall, Executive Director of The Alliance, shares. "Each of these young men is well equipped for success academically. We have continued to recognize and honor the premier African American Scholar Athletes in the United States."

Finalists are chosen based on their unweighted grade point average, their personal statements, extracurricular activities, community service, and letters of recommendation. Each winner will be recognized in the Washington, DC, area and each will receive an award, ring, and dinner in his hometown.

Sponsors of this year's event include our Major Sponsor Under Armour, JMA Solutions, Peoples Financial Services, Wal-Mart, Dell, Inc., Nash Management Group, Profusion, Gary McPherson Financial, Adventus Veritas, and Jostens Corporation, manufacturer of the Watkins Award trophy and rings.

Media representatives are invited to cover the awards ceremony. For more information about the Watkins Award, The Alliance, or to get tickets for the awards ceremony visit our website at [www.naaaa.com](http://www.naaaa.com) or email [everette@naaaa.com](mailto:everette@naaaa.com)

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The Watkins Award has been presented annually to African American scholar-athletes since 1992. The Watkins Award is named for Franklin D. Watkins, the coach of championship football and basketball teams in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Previous award winners include Heisman Trophy Winner Jameis Winston of Tampa Bay Buccaneers, Rhodes Scholar Myron Rolle, Justin Blalock, formerly of the Atlanta Falcons, Gerald McCoy 6 time Pro Bowler of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, Dwayne Haskins and Bryce Love finalists for Heisman, Arrelius Benn of the Jacksonville Jaguars, Ted Ginn Jr of the New Orleans Saints, Lorenzo Alexander of the Buffalo Bills, Mercedes Lewis of Jacksonville Jaguars, Darnell Dinkins, formerly of the New Orleans Saints, LaVar Arrington, formerly of the Washington Redskins, Joseph Barksdale of the Los Angeles Chargers, Grant Irons and Ronald Curry formerly of the Oakland Raiders to name a few.

The National Alliance of African American Athletes was founded in 1989. The mission of The Alliance is to empower African American males through athletics, education and public programs.

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