



The Los Angeles Athletic Club
John R. Wooden Award®
presented by Principal

Wooden Award Marks 50 Years with 2025-26 Men's Preseason Top 50 Watchlist Announcement

The 2025–26 John R. Wooden Award® Men's Preseason Top 50 Watchlist features a deep and balanced field from college basketball's most storied programs, highlighted by veteran leaders such as Purdue's Braden Smith and UConn's Alex Karaban.

EMBARGOED UNTIL 11/18/2025 AT 3:00 PM EST

LOS ANGELES, Calif. (November 18, 2025) – The Los Angeles Athletic Club's John R. Wooden Award, presented by Principal, announced its 2025-26 Men's Preseason Top 50 Watchlist today on WoodenAward.com, launching the fiftieth anniversary season of college basketball's most prestigious individual honor.

Selected by a preseason poll of national college basketball experts, the list comprises 50 student-athletes who are frontrunners for the most prestigious honors in college basketball: the Wooden Award All-American Team™ and the Wooden Award® Most Outstanding Player.

Headlined by returning standouts and an impressive group of rising stars, the 2025-26 John R. Wooden Award® Men's Top 50 Watchlist features a deep and balanced field representing college basketball's most storied programs. The list includes veteran leaders such as Purdue's Braden Smith, UConn's Alex Karaban, and Tennessee's Ja'Kobi Gillespie, alongside a wave of elite newcomers like Duke's Cameron Boozer, Kentucky's Jayden Quaintance, and Kansas' Darryn Peterson. Programs including Kentucky, Florida, and St. John's each boast multiple selections, underscoring the depth of talent across the nation as the Wooden Award celebrates its fiftieth anniversary season.

The players on the list are considered strong candidates for the 2026 John R. Wooden Award® Men's Player of the Year. Players not selected for the list remain eligible for inclusion on the Wooden Award® midseason, late-season list, and the National Ballot. The National Ballot will feature 15 top players who have demonstrated to their universities that they meet or exceed the Wooden Award® qualifications.

Celebrating its fiftieth year, the Wooden Award will feature special programming throughout the season with first winner and ambassador Marques Johnson, culminating in the 2026 John R. Wooden Award presented by Principal. Winners and All Americans will be honored at the Los Angeles Athletic Club on Friday, April 10, 2026.

About the John R. Wooden Award®

Created in 1976, the John R. Wooden Award Program hosts the most prestigious honors in college basketball, recognizing the Wooden Award Most Outstanding Player for men and women, the Wooden Award All-America Teams for men and women, and the annual selection of the Wooden Award Legends of Coaching recipient.

Honorees are certified by their universities as meeting Wooden Award standards established by Coach Wooden, including progress toward graduation and at least a 2.0 cumulative GPA. Past winners include Larry Bird 1979, Michael Jordan 1984, Tim Duncan 1997, Kevin Durant 2007, Candace Parker 2007 and 2008, Maya Moore 2009 and 2011, Chiney Ogwumike 2014, and last year's recipients Juju Watkins of USC and Cooper Flagg of Duke.

Since its inception, the John R. Wooden Award has contributed nearly one million dollars to universities' general scholarship funds and nonprofit enterprises in the names of the Wooden Award All-American recipients, and has sent more than 1,000 underprivileged children to week-long college basketball camps.

The John R. Wooden Award partners with Special Olympics Southern California (SOSC) each year to host the Wooden Award Special Olympics Southern California Basketball Tournament. The day-long event brings together Special Olympics athletes, Wooden Award All-Americans, and attending coaches. It is hosted at the Los Angeles Athletic Club during John R. Wooden Award Weekend.

The mission of the John R. Wooden Award Foundation (JRWAF) is to promote teamwork, academic excellence, and character development, reflecting the enduring values of John R. Wooden. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, the JRWAF serves as an angel organization, independently guiding the funding of educational, athletic, and philanthropic initiatives. A dedicated board of directors leads the Foundation's efforts, committed to advancing John R. Wooden's legacy and the timeless principles of his Pyramid of Success.

The Legends of Coaching Award will be presented alongside the Wooden Award Men's and Women's Players of the Year on Friday, April 10, 2026, at the Los Angeles Athletic Club.

For the latest updates, visit WoodenAward.com and follow @WoodenAward on X, Instagram, and Threads; to learn more about the Los Angeles Athletic Club, visit LAAC.com

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**John R. Wooden Award®
2025-26 Men's top 50 Watchlist**

ALPHABETICAL

Full Name	School	Class	Position	Height
Darius Acuff Jr.	Arkansas	Freshman	G	6-3
Nate Ament	Tennessee	Freshman	F	6-10
Christian Anderson	Texas Tech	Sophomore	G	6-3
Robbie Avila	Saint Louis	Senior	C	6-10
Solo Ball	UConn	Junior	G	6-4
Nate Bittle	Oregon	Senior	C	7-0
John Blackwell	Wisconsin	Junior	G	6-4
Mikel Brown Jr.	Louisville	Freshman	G	6-5
Cameron Boozer	Duke	Freshman	F	6-9
Markus Burton	Notre Dame	Junior	G	6-0
Alex Condon	Florida	Junior	F/C	6-11
Ryan Conwell	Louisville	Senior	G	6-4
Donovan Dent	UCLA	Senior	G	6-2
Tucker DeVries	Indiana	Redshirt Senior	F	6-7
AJ Dybansta	BYU	Freshman	F	6-9
Zuby Ejiofor	St. John's	Senior	F	6-9
Boogie Fland	Florida	Sophomore	G	6-3
Ja'Kobi Gillespie	Tennessee	Senior	G	6-1
Ike Graham	Gonzaga	Grad Student	F	6-9
PJ Haggerty	Kansas State	Junior	G	6-4
Thomas Haugh	Florida	Junior	F	6-9

Full Name	School	Class	Position	Height
Bryce Hopkins	St. John's	Grad Student	F/G	6-7
Josh Hubbard	Mississippi State	Junior	G	6-0
Ian Jackson	St. John's	Sophomore	G	6-5
Trey Kaufman-Renn	Purdue	Senior	F	6-9
Alex Karaban	UConn	Redshirt Senior	F	6-8
Xaivian Lee	Florida	Senior	G	6-4
Yaxel Lendeborg	Michigan	Grad Student	F	6-9
Tamin Lipsey	Iowa State	Senior	G	6-1
Jaland Lowe	Kentucky	Junior	G	6-1.5
Nick Martinelli	Northwestern	Senior	F	6-7
Otega Oweh	Kentucky	Senior	G	6-4
Koa Peat	Arizona	Junior	F	6-8
Darryn Peterson	Kansas	Freshman	G	6-6
Tahaad Pettiford	Auburn	Sophomore	G	6-1
Labaron Philon Jr.	Alabama	Sophomore	G	6-4
Jayden Quaintance	Kentucky	Sophomore	F	6-10.5
Richie Saunders	BYU	Senior	G	6-5
Emanuel Sharp	Houston	Redshirt Senior	G	6-3
Jackson Shelstad	Oregon	Junior	G	6-1
Braden Smith	Purdue	Senior	G	6-0
Bennet Stirtz	Iowa	Senior	G	6-4
Andrej Stojakovic	Illinois	Junior	G	6-7
Bruce Thornton	Ohio state	Senior	G	6-2
JT Toppin	Texas Tech	Junior	F	6-9
Joseph Tugler	Houston	Junior	F	6-8
Milos Uzan	Houston	Senior	G	6-4
D.J. Wagner	Arkansas	Junior	G	6-4
Darrion Williams	NC State	Senior	F	6-6
Caleb Wilson	North Carolina	Freshman	F	6-10