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Tyler Bass Named Semifinalist For Lou Groza Award

Award goes to top collegiate kicker

Football

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WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. - The Palm Beach County Sports Commission has released the 20 semifinalists for the 2018 Lou Groza Collegiate Place-Kicker Award presented by the Orange Bowl, a list that includes Georgia Southern junior Tyler Bass. These 20 kickers have all excelled throughout the season in earning their places as semifinalists. Bass continues the recent strong legacy of Georgia Southern kickers as [Younghoe Koo](#) was named one of three national finalists for the award in 2016.

Only five are returning honorees, including last year's Groza winner Utah senior Matt Gay and fellow finalist Utah State junior Dominik Eberle. They are joined by Georgia junior Rodrigo Blankenship and UTSA sophomore Jared Sackett, both 2017 semifinalists, as well as San Diego State senior John Baron II who earned the honor in 2016.

Among the 15 new names are two very different types of first-year FBS kickers who sit atop the leader boards. Syracuse freshman Andre Szymt and LSU senior Cole Tracy, a graduate transfer from Division II, lead the nation with 21 made field goals. The next five kickers trailing them while also connecting at 80% or better are also semifinalists: Arkansas junior Connor Limpert (16), Eberle (15), North Texas senior Cole Hedlund (15), Baron (14), and Wyoming junior Cooper Rothe (14).

Rothe, in fact, is still a perfect 14-for-14 on field goals, the most in FBS by a kicker without a miss. He's joined on the semifinal list by the two other kickers still perfect while attempting more field goals than team games: Georgia Southern junior [Tyler Bass](#) (11) and UCF senior Matthew Wright (8). The next four most accurate qualifying kickers are also semifinalists: Florida freshman Evan McPherson (92.3),

Michigan State sophomore Matt Coghlin (91.7), Szymt (91.3) and Tracy (91.3). Moving from accuracy to distance, the six kickers with the most field goals from 40 yards or longer are all semifinalists: Sackett (9), Illinois senior Chase McLaughlin (8), Blankenship (7), Eberle (7), Szymt (7), and Central Michigan junior Ryan Tice (7).

Semifinalists will be voted on by a panel of more than 100 FBS head coaches, SIDs, media members, former Groza finalists, and current NFL kickers to select the three finalists. These finalists will be announced on November 20 th and honored at the 27 th annual Lou Groza Collegiate Place-Kicker Awards Banquet on Dec. 3 in Palm Beach County. The same panel then selects the winner, who will be announced live on ESPN at the Home Depot College Football Awards Show on Thursday, Dec. 6.

The Award is named for National Football League Hall of Fame kicker Lou "The Toe" Groza, who played 21 seasons with the Cleveland Browns. Groza won four NFL championships with Cleveland setting numerous franchise records, including most games played, most points scored, and an amazing 107 consecutive games in which he scored a point. He was named NFL Player of the Year in 1954 and was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1974. Although an All-Pro offensive lineman as well, Groza ushered in the notion that there should be a place on an NFL roster for a kicker.

For more information on the Lou Groza Collegiate Place-Kicker Award and to see the "Stars of the Week" throughout the season, please go to www.lougrozaaward.com. For even more updates on the best kicking performances throughout the season, follow @LouGrozaAward on Twitter. Copyright ©2021 Georgia Southern University Athletics