



# THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF AFRICAN AMERICAN ATHLETES

A 501 c 3 Non-Profit Organization

[www.naaaa.com](http://www.naaaa.com)

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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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### African American Scholar-Athletes Receive Top Honors

Washington, DC (January 2, 2025) – On **Saturday, February 22, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.**, the National Alliance of African American Athletes (The Alliance) will recognize another stellar group of high school scholar-athletes from across the nation for **The Franklin D. Watkins Memorial Trophy Award**. The award is presented each year to the nation's top African American male high school scholar-athletes.

**The Six 2025 Watkins Recipients in alphabetical order are:**

- \* **Bryce Baker**, Kernersville NC, East Forsyth High School – 4.1 GPA: National Honor Society, 4 Year Honor Roll, Crosby Scholars, Fellowship of Christian Athletes Leader, Community Engagement Volunteer, Bethesda Feed the Homeless volunteer, The Dwelling Feed the Homeless volunteer, Youth Football guest speaker, Youth recreation sports guest speaker, Basketball 1000 point club, All Conference Football and Basketball, Central Piedmont Conference Offensive Player of the Year, Football Team MVP, 10 Time Max Preps Player of the Week, Rivals Camp Series Quarterback MVP, Shrine Bowl of NC Camp MVP, 3x MVP Friday Night Rivals, #1 rated QB in North Carolina, North Carolina Football All State, Mr. North Carolina Football, Elite 11 Finalist, ESPN & Rivals Top 10 QB in the Nation Navy All-American Bowl invitee, Carolina Shrine Bowl All American.
- \* **Bryce Davis**, Greensboro, NC, Grimsley High School – 4.1 GPA: National Honor Society, National Spanish Honors Society, 4 Year A/B Honor Roll, Kiser Middle School Mentor, Volunteer for Tiger Teammate Lunch Buddy Program, Volunteer for Miracle League of High Point, Volunteer for Under the Bridge Project, Member of Grimsley Chess Club, News & Record All-Area Honors, All-Metro 4A Conference, Defensive MVP, 2x MaxPreps Player of the Game, Grimsley Football Team Captain, Conference Defensive Player of the Year, NC First Team All-State, Football State Champion, Rivals #2 Recruit in NC, #6 DE Recruit in NC, Under Armour All-American.
- \* **Gavin Nix**, Orlando, FL, IMG Academy – 4.0 GPA: National Honors Society, 4 Year Honor Roll, Volunteer Boys and Girls Club, Student Leader & Mentor, Youth Football Mentor, Initiated Leadership and Character Development Initiative, Florida State Champion, Freshman All American, Rivals MVP, Rivals Miami MVP, Iron Valor Award, Captains Award, IMG Ascender All Star, Ray Lewis Top 52, Butkus Award, ESPN Top 3000, Rivals 7<sup>th</sup> in the Nation, Under Armour All American.
- \* **Dylan Robinson**, Upland, CA, Bonita High School – 4.2 GPA: 4 Year Honor Roll, Volunteer Coach La Verne San Dimas Youth League, Volunteer math tutor, Member of Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Volunteer at Priceless Pets Rescue, Community Outreach Volunteer, Scholar Athlete Award, Football Team Captain, Track Team Captain, Most Valuable Player Track, League Champion 100 meters, 1st Team Track, All League Award football, 1st Team Defensive, Sierra League Player of the Year football, 1st team All CIF football, Under Armour Next MVP, On3 ranked #15 DB in nation, Rivals Ranking #7 athlete in nation, 247 Sports Composite #6 Athlete in the nation.
- \* **Malik Washington**, Glen Burnie, MD, Archbishop Spalding High School – 4.0 GPA: National Honors Honor Society, Spalding Principles Honor Roll, Youth Basketball and Football Camp Counselor, Founder of Friday Night Lights with Malik Washington summer camp for kids, Member of Black Student Union, Elementary school field day volunteer, 3x MIAA champion (1st in school history), 3x Rhodes Trophy award winner (1st in history), 3x MIAA player of the year, 3x Baltimore Sun player of the year, 3x Capital Gazette player of the year, Gatorade player of the year for MD, Max preps player of the year for MD, Washington Post player of the year, Baltimore Banner Player of the year, 2x 1st team all met Washington post, Navy All American, Army All American, Elite 11 finalists, 247 #5 QB in nation, Rivals #5 QB in nation, Led team to national top 10 in the nation for 1st time ever, Under Armour All American.

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**Watkins Award Chair, emeritus**  
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**“Empowerment Through Education and Athletics”**



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- \* **Mark Zackery**, Indianapolis, IN, Ben Davis High School – 4.2 GPA: National Honors Society, 4 Year High Honor Roll, Straight A's Recognition Award, Mr. Giant, Member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Young Men of Purpose Club Member, Kiwanis Indianapolis Colts Academic MVP Scholar, Youth Basketball & Football Coach, Youth Mentor, Domestic Violence Shelter Volunteer, Voice of the Victim Certificate of Appreciation, Christamore House Volunteer, Indiana State Class 4A Basketball Champion, Indianapolis Basketball Super Team, Indianapolis Football Player of the Year, Indiana All County, Kiwanis Colts G.R.E.A.T Player Scholarship Award, Griddy's Award Recipient, Great American Rivalry Scholar Athlete Award, Indiana All MIC conference, Indiana Football Coaches Association Top 50 Player, Indiana 6A State Football Champions, Marion County Player of the Year, Max Preps Indiana Player of the Year, Kiwanis Indianapolis Colts All County Player of the Year, Indiana Hall of Fame Classic MVP, Indiana Mr. Football Defensive Backs, Indiana All State, Indiana Football Top 50 All State Team, Overall Indiana Mr. Football.

## The Watkins Award ceremony will be held at the Washington DC Hilton

"This year's 2025 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."

Watkins Recipients 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 and supporters of this year's event include: Under Armour, Destination DC, Events DC, JMA Solutions, Pacific Club Impact Foundation, Iconic Plumbing, Peoples Community Foundation, Dell Giving, Profusion, Gary McPherson Financial, and Jostens, 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)

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 the New Orleans Saints, Rhodes Scholar Myron Rolle, Justin Blalock, formerly of the Atlanta Falcons, Gerald McCoy, 6-time Pro Bowler and 12-year NFL Alumnus, Nakobe Dean of the Philadelphia Eagles, and Butkus Award Winner, Heisman Trophy finalists Dwayne Haskins and Bryce Love. Arrelius Benn, formerly of the Jacksonville Jaguars, Ted Ginn, Jr. a 14 year NFL Alumnus, Devin White of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, Lorenzo Alexander, a 15 year NFL Alumnus, Mercedes Lewis of the Chicago Bears, Darnell Dinkins, an 8-year NFL Alumnus and Super Bowl Champion with the New Orleans Saints, LaVar Arrington, a 7-year NFL Alumnus, and Ronald Curry, an 8-year NFL Alumnus, to name a few. The full roster of past Watkins recipients can be found at [www.naaaa.com/classbook](http://www.naaaa.com/classbook)

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. The mentoring program and the Watkins Award for high school male African American Athletes are the cornerstones of our programs. The NAAAA works to improve academic success and elevate thousands of youths. The Watkins Award program has enabled the NAAAA to mentor young people as they navigate the amateur, high school, collegiate, and professional athletics. The NAAAA's SAT prep program has served over 25,000 students of all backgrounds in over 25 cities. The Teen Summits have impacted thousands of youth in cities and opened students' eyes to the academic and industry opportunities available.

**"Empowerment Through Education and Athletics"**