

# Denzel Burke, Caleb Downs, Jack Sawyer Named To Bednarik Award Watch List



In what should be a very strong Ohio State defense this season, three players from the Buckeyes are featured on the preseason watch list for the Bednarik Award.

Cornerback Denzel Burke, safety Caleb Downs and defensive end Jack Sawyer are the three featured on the list for the award that goes to the best defensive player in college football.

Check out the 2024 #BednarikAward Watchlist [#MaxwellFootball](#)

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— Maxwell Football (@MaxwellFootball) August 12, 2024

Downs and Burke have been mainstays on defensive preseason award watch lists, but for Sawyer, this is the first that he has been featured on after a very strong second half to the 2023 season.

The three Buckeyes are among 90 players on the Bednarik Award watch list and are a few of many returning players on what was already one of the nation's strongest defenses in the country last season.

Burke had a bounce back junior year after having some struggles in 2022, showing that he is one of the best cornerbacks in the country. He and Downs, who transferred from Alabama after an outstanding freshman season, were both on the watch list for the Jim Thorpe Award as well, which is given to the best defensive back in the country.

Sawyer's breakout in the 2023 season came after he was moved back to defensive end after being at the Jack position and he finished the year with 48 tackles, 10 for a loss, 6½ sacks, two passes broken up and two forced fumbles.