

Ohio State's Kaleb Wesson Named Finalist For Abdul-Jabbar Award



Kaleb Wesson, a junior big man for the Ohio State men's basketball team, is one of 10 finalists for the 2020 Kareem Abdul-Jabbar Center of the Year Award, which is presented annually by the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame.

Wesson leads the Buckeyes in both scoring (14.3 ppg.) and rebounding (9.8 rpg.) while shooting 46.3 percent from the field and 41.9 percent from beyond the arc.

The former state champion at Westerville South also boasts the most field goals made (101), free throws made (82) and blocks (25) on the team.

In his third season in scarlet and gray, Wesson is climbing the Ohio State record books, becoming Buckeye No. 58 to score 1,000 career points (1,121) and needing just one rebound to become the No. 22 player with 600 career rebounds.

Wesson recently led the Buckeyes to their third straight victory with a dominant performance against archrival Michigan. The third-year center scored 23 points and grabbed 12 rebounds while shooting 9 of 14 from the field and 3 of 6 from beyond the arc.

"Kaleb was fantastic tonight leading the way," Ohio State head coach Chris Holtmann said. "He imposed himself in a lot of ways."

Not only did Wesson dominate offensively, but held his counterpart Michigan 7-foot-1 center Jon Teske to a three-point game on 1-of-7 shooting. Wesson has begun to show he can impose his will on both ends, much like the legendary Abdul-Jabbar.

"The athletes on this list model many of the traits that made Kareem Abdul-Jabbar a world-class player," President and CEO of the Basketball Hall of Fame John L. Doleva said. "Mr. Abdul-Jabbar is unmatched when it comes to his accomplishments at both the collegiate and professional level. As an advocate for education and character, he brings a unique perspective when evaluating talent and we greatly value his input throughout this process."

In March, five finalists will be presented to Mr. Abdul-Jabbar and the Hall of Fame's selection committee. The winner of the 2020 Kareem Abdul-Jabbar Award will be presented at The College Basketball Awards in Los Angeles on Friday, April 10, along with the other four members of the Men's

Starting Five.

Additional awards being presented and receiving support from Eaton Ephesus Lighting include the Bob Cousy Point Guard Award, the Jerry West Shooting Guard Award, the Julius Erving Small Forward Award and the Karl Malone Power Forward Award, in addition to the Women's Starting Five.

Previous winners of the Kareem Abdul-Jabbar Center of the Year Award include Ethan Happ, Wisconsin (2019), Angel Delgado, Seton Hall (2018), Przemek Karnowski, Gonzaga (2017), Jakob Poeltl, Utah (2016) and Frank Kaminsky, Wisconsin (2015).

2020 Kareem Abdul-Jabbar Center of the Year Award Candidates

Vernon Carey Jr. Duke
Omer Yurtseven Georgetown
Filip Petrushev Gonzaga
Luka Garza Iowa
Udoka Azubuike Kansas
Daniel Oturu Minnesota
Kaleb Wesson Ohio State
Onyeka Okongwu USC
Isaiah Stewart Washington
Nathan Knight William and Mary

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