

Contact Information:

College Insider, Inc.
Natalie Rivers
(781) 414-1698
natalie_rivers@collegeinsider.com

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2025-26 LOU HENSON AWARD EARLY SEASON WATCH LIST

The top players in mid-major college basketball

BOSTON, MA -- CollegeInsider.com has announced the 'Early Season Watch List' for the 2025-26 Lou Henson award, which is presented annually to the top player in mid-major college basketball.

The Lou Henson award honors the former Illinois and New Mexico State head coach who won 775 games in 41 seasons.

Coach Henson is the winningest coach in Illinois basketball history with 423 victories. During his 21 seasons (1975-1996), Henson led the Fighting Illini to 16 postseason appearances, including 12 NCAA tournaments and a Final Four appearance in 1989.

Henson, who is also the all-time winningest coach in New Mexico State history with 289 victories, is one of only 11 coaches to take two different schools to the NCAA Final Four. His teams have made 19 NCAA appearances and four NIT appearances.

Coach Henson passed away on July 25, 2020.

The recipient of the annual award is determined by a 10-member voting committee, which consists of current and former head coaches, as well as two senior staff members of collegeinsider.com.

The 2026 award will be announced in Indianapolis, IN, site of the men's Division I Basketball Championship.

LOU HENSON AWARD EARLY SEASON WATCH LIST

CJ Anthony	6-0	Sr.	Iona
Marcus Banks, Jr.	6-3	Sr.	UMass
Leo Beath	6-9	Jr.	UC San Diego
Austin Benigni	5-11	Sr.	Navy
Brycen Blaine	6-5	Jr.	Charleston Southern
Leon Bond, III	6-5	Jr.	Northern Iowa
Isaac Bruns	6-5	Jr.	South Dakota
Javontae Campbell	6-2	Sr.	Bowling Green
Zach Cleveland	6-7	Sr.	Liberty
Simeon Cottle	6-2	Sr.	Kennesaw State
Chandler Cuthrell	6-8	Sr.	Elon
Dominique Daniels, Jr.	5-10	Sr.	California Baptist
Cruz Davis	6-3	Jr.	Hofstra
Brett Decker, Jr.	6-3	So.	Liberty
Quinn Denker	6-3	Sr.	Northern Colorado
Thomas Dowd	6-8	Jr.	Troy
Cam'Ron Fletcher	6-7	Sr.	High Point
Daniel Freitag	6-2	So.	Buffalo
Delrecco Gillespie	6-8	Sr.	Kent State
DeSean Goode	6-8	So.	Robert Morris
Corey Hadnot II	6-3	Jr.	Purdue-Fort Wayne
Christian Hammond	6-4	So.	Santa Clara
Bryce Harris	6-4	Sr.	Howard
Robert Hinton	6-5	So.	Harvard
Nolan Hodge	6-7	Sr.	UNCW
Jackson Holcombe	6-7	So.	Utah Valley
Evan Ipsaro	6-0	Jr.	Miami
Javon Jackson	6-3	Sr.	Murray State
Dior Johnson	6-3	Jr.	Tarleton State
Jaquan Johnson	5-11	So.	Bradley
Tavari Johnson	6-0	Sr.	Akron
Jemel Jones	6-4	Sr.	New Mexico State
Tyler Lundblade	6-5	Sr.	Belmont
Nolan Minessale	6-5	So.	Saint Thomas (MN)
Amarri Monroe	6-7	Sr.	Quinnipiac
Teagan Moore	6-5	So.	Western Kentucky
Paulius Murauskas	6-8	Jr.	Saint Mary's

Kenny Noland	6-2	Sr.	Columbia
Baraka Okojie	6-3	Jr.	Mercer
Jalen Quinn	6-3	Sr.	Drake
Brody Robinson	5-11	Sr.	Oakland
Darin Smith, Jr.	6-7	So.	Central Connecticut
Jalen Speer	6-1	Sr.	Marshall
Corey Stephenson	6-6	Sr.	Florida International
Tyler Tejada	6-9	Jr.	Towson
Keon Thompson	6-1	Sr.	Stephen F Austin
Nick Townsend	6-7	Sr.	Yale
Lance Waddles	6-4	Sr.	Omaha
Damari Wheeler-Thomas	6-0	Jr.	North Dakota State
Money Williams	6-4	Jr.	Montana

PREVIOUS AWARD WINNERS

Brian Moore, Jr., (Norfolk State); Trey Townsend, Oakland (2024); Jordan Brown (2023); Malachi Smith, Chattanooga (2022); Max Abmas, Oral Roberts (2021); Nathan Knight, William & Mary (2020); Fletcher Magee, Wofford (2019); Clayton Custer, Loyola Chicago (2018); Justin Robinson, Monmouth (2017); Thomas Walkup, Stephen F. Austin (2016); Ty Greene, USC Upstate (2015); Langston Hall, Mercer (2014); Matthew Dellavedova, Saint Mary's (2013); Kyle O'Quinn, Norfolk State (2012); Matt Howard, Butler (2011), Keith Benson, Oakland (2010).

ABOUT COLLEGEINSIDER.COM

Established in 1996, CollegeInsider.com has been at the forefront of promoting college basketball online. In the July 27, 1998, issue of ESPN the Magazine, College Insider was ranked No. 24 on the magazine's list of *99 Things to do Before you Die*. College Insider created the Mid-Major Top 25®, the measuring stick for men's and women's programs outside of the proverbial power leagues, and has 18 national awards presented annually, including the Lute Olson Award, Lou Henson Award, and the John McLendon Award. The CollegeInsider.com All-Access series has been nominated for 5 Emmy Awards and won 2013 Emmy, for its' feature on New York City Basketball (Iona, LIU-Brooklyn and Manhattan). CI also created *This Game No Secret*, which debuted during the 2016 CIT and now has become an annual event, which has included programs like Duke, Houston, Miami, Ohio State, Ole Miss, Texas and Virginia.

