

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Orange Bowl Committee
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PITTSBURGH'S JAMES CONNER NOMINATED FOR CAPITAL ONE ORANGE BOWL-FWAA COURAGE AWARD

DALLAS (FWAA) – Pittsburgh's **James Conner** is the first weekly nominee for the **2016 Capital One Orange Bowl-FWAA Courage Award**.

Conner, a redshirt junior running back, announced in December that he was diagnosed with Hodgkin lymphoma. The Erie, Pa., native said all along that he would be ready for the start of the 2016 season, and after 12 rounds of chemotherapy, he beat the disease and was back on the field for the Panthers.

"The doctor tells you from the start you've got a good percentage of beating it, but nothing's guaranteed in this business, things always can turn or something else," Conner told ESPN.com this summer after being declared cancer-free. "But you just learn to see how you're stronger than what you think you are and you find people that really care about (you). You get stronger mentally, you just become a better person and a more positive personality once you say you finally beat it."

Conner has returned with a bang, rushing for 170 yards and two touchdowns on 39 carries through his first two games, to go with seven catches for 45 yards and two receiving touchdowns. Conner, who won the 2014 ACC player of the year award before missing almost all of 2015 with an MCL tear, was instrumental in 2-0 Pitt's win Saturday over Penn State, rushing for 117 yards in the rivals' first meeting in 16 years.

The Courage Award was first presented by the Football Writers Association of America (FWAA) in 2002. A select group of writers from the FWAA vote on the winner each year. The requirements for nomination include displaying courage on or off the field, including overcoming an injury or physical handicap, preventing a disaster or living through hardship. The winner of the award will be included in festivities during Capital One Orange Bowl week and receive his trophy at an on-field presentation.

Previous winners of the Capital One Orange Bowl-FWAA Courage Award are Miami offensive lineman Hunter Knighton (2015), Duke offensive lineman Laken Tomlinson (2014), San Jose State defensive lineman Anthony Larceval (2013), Clemson wide receiver Daniel Rodriguez (2012), Michigan State offensive lineman Arthur Ray Jr. (2011), Rutgers defensive tackle Eric LeGrand (2010), the University of Connecticut football team (2009), Tulsa's Wilson Holloway (2008), Navy's Zerbin Singleton (2007), Clemson's Ray Ray McElrathbey (2006), the Tulane football team (2005), Memphis' Haracio Colen (2004), San Jose State's Neil Parry (2003) and Toledo's William Bratton (2002).

About the Orange Bowl

The Orange Bowl is a 360-member, primarily-volunteer non-profit sports organization that promotes and serves the South Florida community. With its primary mission since being created in 1935 to bring tourism to South Florida through an annual football game and events, it has also maintained a legacy of charitable contributions and community outreach. Orange Bowl community outreach efforts are

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comprised of four pillars: youth sports, fundraising and community events, academic programs and scholarships, and legacy gifts. The Orange Bowl features a year-round schedule of events culminating with the Capital One Orange Bowl on December 30, 2016. For more information on the 2016-17 Orange Bowl events, including promotional and volunteer opportunities through the Ambassador Program presented by Panera Bread, log on to www.orangebowl.org. Follow Orange Bowl: [@OrangeBowl](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

About the FWAA

The Football Writers Association of America consists of 1,400 men and women who cover college football. The membership includes journalists, broadcasters and publicists, as well as key executives in all the areas that involve the game. The FWAA works to govern areas that include game-day operations, major awards and its annual All-America team. For more information about the FWAA and its award programs, or to submit a nomination for this year's Capital One Orange Bowl-FWAA Courage Award, contact Steve Richardson at tiger@fwaa.com.

2016 Capital One Orange Bowl Courage Award Nominees

- **Sept. 14: James Conner, Pittsburgh**

***Editor's Note: High quality photos of nominee available upon request.**

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