

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Orange Bowl Committee
September 27, 2017



Larry Wahl
wahl@orangebowl.org
305-341-4718

FLORIDA'S CRISTIAN GARCIA NOMINATED FOR CAPITAL ONE ORANGE BOWL-FWAA COURAGE AWARD

DALLAS (FWAA) – Florida's **Cristian Garcia** is this week's nominee for the **2017 Capital One Orange Bowl-FWAA Courage Award**.

Garcia, a redshirt senior linebacker, was credited by the Gainesville Police Department in the summer of 2016 for preventing a sexual assault while he was working at a local restaurant. He was featured on ABC's "Good Morning America" and met then-Vice President Joe Biden, who honored Garcia with one of the administration's inaugural "It's On Us" courage awards.

"I guess it was something instinctual," Garcia told Yahoo Sports this summer. "Something in my moral compass. It was humiliating for the girl and I stopped it."

Garcia had been taking out the trash when he saw a man on top of an unresponsive 19-year-old woman behind a dumpster. He grabbed the man and told him to get off her.

The man tried to incite a fight with Garcia before fleeing with friends.



Garcia, a Miami native, had played college football at Malone (Ohio) University and Florida Tech before transferring to Santa Fe College in Gainesville in 2014, when he worked with the Gators' football video staff. He walked on to Florida's football team the following year, and he earned a scholarship this past summer, ahead of his final season of eligibility.

Garcia has played in 17 career games for Florida, starting in the Gators' Outback Bowl win against Iowa last season and recording five tackles. He recorded four tackles, including a tackle for loss, in Florida's 28-27 win this past Saturday against Kentucky.

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 Pittsburgh running back James Conner (2016), 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 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, 2017. For more information on the 2017-18 Orange Bowl events, including promotional and volunteer opportunities through the Ambassador Program presented by Panera Bread, log on to orangebowl.org. Follow Orange Bowl: [@OrangeBowl](https://twitter.com/OrangeBowl), [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/OrangeBowl) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/OrangeBowl).

Founded in 1941, 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, contact Steve Richardson at tiger@fwaa.com.

2017 Orange Bowl Courage Award Nominees

- [Sept. 13: J-Shun Harris II, Indiana](#) | [High-resolution headshot](#)
- [Sept. 20: William Lee, Northern Illinois](#) | [High-resolution headshot](#)

Social Media Link: <http://bit.ly/2xB0xPp>

Editor's Note: High resolution images available upon request

###