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UCLA'S BALL WINS 2016-17 WAYMAN TISDALE AWARD

SACRAMENTO, CALIF. (USBWA) – UCLA's **Lonzo Ball**, the nation's assist leader and a key player for the Bruins as they have tied a school record for most wins in a regular season, has been selected by the **U.S. Basketball Writers Association** to receive the **Wayman Tisdale Award** as the National Freshman Player of the Year for the 2016-17 college basketball season. The announcement came as the Bruins are preparing for their NCAA Tournament first-round game vs. Kent State.

A 6-6 guard from Chino Hills, Calif., Ball leads the nation in assists per game (7.7) and total assists (241) while establishing the Pac-12 Conference freshman assists record for one season. In addition, he is averaging 14.6 points and 6.2 rebounds per game and is on pace to become the first Pac-12 player to average at least 14 points, seven assists and six rebounds in a season since California's Jason Kidd in the 1993-94 season.

Ball and teammates Bryce Alford and TJ Leaf were instrumental in UCLA leading the nation in scoring at 91.3 points per game and tying a school record with 29 regular-season victories.

Ball was named to the USBWA's All-America first team, becoming the first UCLA freshman to earn first-team honors since Kevin Love did it in the 2007-08 season. Ball was also selected Freshman of the Year in the Pac-12 and the USBWA's District IX Player of the Year.



“What we enjoy most about Lonzo is how consistent he's been with our team,” said UCLA coach Steve Alford. “Nothing fazes this young man. He's the same guy each and every day and has done a great job at keeping his focus on our next game. He has helped prepare this team the best that he can, and he does so many things to make everybody else better.”

“He can beat you with his passing, his shooting, his defense, his ability to create for himself, and how he's able to create for others. Above being an outstanding basketball player, I'm most appreciative of the strong character that Lonzo demonstrates every day. We're fortunate to have him on our team. He's a major part of what we're doing, and I know that he's looking forward to this NCAA Tournament.”

The USBWA has chosen a national freshman of the year award since the 1988-89 season. It was named in honor of the late Wayman Tisdale in 2011. Tisdale was a three-time USBWA All-American at Oklahoma and the first freshman ever to receive first-team All-America honors from the USBWA. Following a stint on the 1984 U.S. Olympic basketball team, he played 12 seasons in the NBA before retiring in 1997 to focus on a blossoming jazz music career. In March 2007, he was diagnosed with cancer and, following a courageous and difficult battle that included the amputation of his right leg in 2008, he passed away in May 2009.

Notable winners of the USBWA's national freshman of the year award include Kevin Durant, Carmelo Anthony, Jason Kidd and Chris Webber. LSU's Ben Simmons won the award last season.

The **U.S. Basketball Writers Association** was formed in 1956 at the urging of then-NCAA Executive Director Walter Byers. With some 900 members worldwide, it is one of the most influential organizations in college basketball. For more information on the USBWA and its award programs, contact executive director Joe Mitch at 314-795-6821.