

# BIGSKYCONF.COM



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## **BIG SKY ANNOUNCES FOOTBALL ALL-CONFERENCE TEAM**

**OGDEN, Utah (November 24, 2015)-** The Big Sky Conference has announced its Football All-Conference team and individual award winners for the 2015 regular season.

The team was selected by the league's coaches, who were not allowed to vote for their student-athletes. Then, the votes were compiled by the league office.

Eastern Washington receiver Cooper Kupp is this year's Offensive Player of the Year, and is also a first-team wide receiver. A three-time first-team receiver in the Big Sky, Kupp was a consensus selection to this season's first-team. He led the FCS in five categories - receptions (114), receptions per game (10.4), reception yards (1,642), reception yards per game (149.3) and touchdown receptions (19). Kupp also has set eight Big Sky records in his career.

Kupp is one of two wide receivers to win the Offensive Player of the Year award, with the other being Idaho's Eric Yarber in 1985. Kupp is considered to be a strong candidate for the STATS National Offensive Player of the Year award.

Southern Utah defensive end James Cowser is the recipient of this season's Defensive Player of the Year award, in part due to his role leading the Big Sky's top defense. Cowser, who is a two-time all-Big Sky first-team player, finished the season with 11 sacks and 17 tackles-for-loss. In the process of posting those statistics, Cowser set the FCS all-time record in both categories, as well as besting the Big Sky records posted by Idaho State's Jared Allen.

Cowser is a candidate for National Defensive Player of the Year, and was a consensus first-team selection.

For the first time ever in the history of the Freshman of the Year award, the league's coaches unanimously voted for two players to win the award- Northern Arizona quarterback Case Cookus and North Dakota running back John Santiago.

Cookus finished the season by throwing for 3,110 yards and 37 touchdowns, and led the nation for most the season in passer efficiency. Cookus also received the league's first-team all-Big Sky honors at quarterback, as he kept Northern Arizona in the playoff hunt until the final week of the season.

Santiago led all FCS freshman running backs and the Big Sky Conference with 1,459 yards and 16 rushing touchdowns, while also leading all FCS rookies with a UND regular-season record of 2,159 all-purpose yards (1,459 rush, 81 receiving, 38 punt return, 581 kick return).

He became the first true freshman to lead the Big Sky in rushing in the 53-year history of the league and burst onto the national scene with an FCS-leading nine 100-yard rushing games in 2015, including surpassing that total in all eight of his league games.

Santiago was voted a consensus all-Big Sky first-team running back, to add to his list of accomplishments in the 2015 season.

Both Cookus and Santiago are candidates for the National Freshman of the Year award.

Portland State quarterback Alex Kuresa won the league's Newcomer of the Year award, and his victory symbolizes the effort of a Portland State team that barged its way into the league's upper echelon, as the Vikings finished the regular season with a 9-2 record.

Kuresa helped manage Portland State's offense in two wins over FBS opponents, including the Pac-12's Washington State. Kuresa threw for 1,863 yards and 16 touchdowns, while also rushing for 707 yards on the season. A transfer from Snow College, Kuresa is the first Portland State player to win the award, and was also an all-Big Sky honorable mention at quarterback.

Other individual notables on the all-conference list include Northern Colorado earning two special teams honors, as Hakeem Deggs was named first-team all-Big Sky special teams player of the year, and Ellis Onic II was named first-team all-Big Sky return specialist.

Southern Utah safety Miles Killebrew earned all-Big Sky honors at multiple positions, being named a first-team safety and a second-team special teams players.

Montana State guard JP Flynn earning his third all-Big Sky selection, placing on the third team.

Overall, Northern Arizona led all teams by placing five players on the first team, followed by Southern Utah and Montana placing four players on the first team.

Southern Utah and Montana led all teams with 12 players selected for all-Big Sky honors, with North Dakota and Portland State adding 11 players to the mix.

All-Conference List  
First Team

Name	School	Year	Position	Hometown
*Cooper Kupp	Eastern Washington	Jr.	WR	Yakima, Wash.
Emmanuel Butler	Northern Arizona	So.	WR	Phoenix, Ariz.
Jamaal Jones	Montana	Sr.	WR	Spanaway, Wash.
Clay DeBord	Eastern Washington	Sr.	OT	Asotin, Wash.
John Weidenaar	Montana State	Sr.	OT	Manhattan, Mont.
Sean Meehan	North Dakota	Sr.	OG	Trevor, Wis.
Aaron Neary	Eastern Washington	Sr.	OG	Richland, Wash.
Joe Hawkins	Weber State	Sr.	C	Vero Beach, Fla.
Beau Sandland	Montana State	Sr.	TE	Simi Valley, Calif.
Case Cookus	Northern Arizona	Fr.	QB	Thousand Oaks, Calif.
*John Santiago	North Dakota	Fr.	RB	St. Francis, Minn.
Casey Jahn	Northern Arizona	Sr.	RB	Peoria, Ariz.
Joe Protheroe	Cal Poly	So.	FB	Concord, Calif.
Ryan Hawkins	Northern Arizona	Sr.	PK	Peoria, Ariz.
Hakeem Deggs	Northern Colorado	RSo.	ST	Plaquemine, La.
Ellis Onic II	Northern Colorado	RSo.	RS	Dallas, Texas
Tyler Kuder	Idaho State	RSr.	DT	Payette, Idaho
Caleb Kidder,	Montana	RJr.	DT	Helena, Mont.
*James Cowser	Southern Utah	Sr.	DE	Fruit Heights, Utah
Tyrone Holmes	Montana	Sr.	DE	Eagle Point, Ore.
Michael Needham	Southern Utah	So.	OLB	St. George, Utah
Herbert Gamboa	Montana	Sr.	OLB	San Clemente, Calif.
Will Ratelle	North Dakota	Sr.	ILB	Edina, Minn.
Darnell Sankey	Sacramento State	Sr.	ILB	San Jose, Calif.
Marcus Alford	Northern Arizona	Sr.	CB	Oxnard, Calif.
LeShaun Sims	Southern Utah	Sr.	CB	Las Vegas, Nev.
Miles Killebrew	Southern Utah	Sr.	S	Las Vegas, Nev.
Patrick Onwuasor	Portland State	Sr.	S	Inglewood, Calif.
Ryan Hawkins	Northern Arizona	Sr.	P	Peoria, Ariz.

Second Team

Name	School	Year	Position	Hometown
Madison Mangum	Idaho State	Sr.	WR	Boise, Idaho
Mike Sharp	Southern Utah	Jr.	WR	St. George, Utah
Kendrick Bourne	Eastern Washington	Jr.	WR	Portland, Ore.
John Schmaing	Montana	Sr.	OT	Billings, Mont.
Kyle Smith	Portland State	Jr.	OT	Elmira, Ore.
Brandon Anderson	North Dakota	Sr.	OG	Sartell, Minn.
Cameron Young	Weber State	Jr.	OG	Cove, Texas
Colton Boas	North Dakota	Sr.	C	Bloomfield, Iowa
R.J. Rickert	Northern Arizona	Sr.	TE	Gilbert, Ariz.
Dakota Prukop	Montana State	Jr.	QB	Austin, Texas
David Jones	Portland State	Sr.	RB	Kent, Wash.
Xavier Finney	Idaho State	Sr.	RB	Oceanside, Calif.
Zach Adler	North Dakota	Sr.	FB	Omaha, Neb.
Daniel Sullivan	Montana	Sr.	PK	Mill Creek, Wash.
Miles Killebrew	Southern Utah	Sr.	STP	Las Vegas, Nev.
Eric Wilkes	Weber State	So.	RS	Las Vegas, Nev.
Taylor Sheridan	Montana State	Sr.	DT	Littleton, Colo.
Sadat Sulleyman	Portland State	Sr.	DT	Spanaway, Wash.
Samson Ebukam	Eastern Washington	Jr.	DE	Portland, Ore.
Davond Dade	Portland State	So.	DE	Los Angeles, Calif.
Brian Labat	North Dakota	Jr.	OLB	Detroit Lakes, Minn.
Tre'von Johnson	Weber State	Jr.	OLB	Salt Lake City, Utah
Kendrick Van Ackeren	Montana	Sr.	ILB	Bellevue, Wash.
Emmett Tela	Weber State	So.	ILB	Provo, Utah
Devonte Johnson	Weber State	Sr.	CB	Denver, Colo.
Xavier Coleman	Portland State	Jr.	CB	Portland, Ore.
Eddie Horn	Northern Arizona	Sr.	S	Hayward, Calif.
Cole Reyes	North Dakota	So.	S	Schaumber, Ill.

Mitch Meindel	North Dakota	RSo.	P	Waukesha, Wis.
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### Third Team

Name	School	Year	Position	Hometown
Ellis Henderson	Montana	RJr.	WR	Vancouver, Wash.
Mitch Herbert	Montana State	So.	WR	Eugene, Ore.
Shane Harrison	Sacramento State	Sr.	WR	Chatsworth, Calif.
Jacob Julian	Northern Arizona	Jr.	OT	Prescott, Ariz.
Mike Davis	Portland State	Sr.	OT	Chico, Calif.
JP Flynn	Montana State	Jr.	OG	Bettendorf, Iowa
Cam Keizur	Portland State	Jr.	OG	West Linn, Ore.
Stephen Sippel	Cal Poly	Sr.	C	Folsom, Calif.
Steven Wroblewski	Southern Utah	Sr.	TE	Brainerd, Minn.
Ammon Olsen	Southern Utah	Sr.	QB	Draper, Utah
Chad Newell	Montana State	Jr.	RB	Billings, Mont.
Kori Garcia	Cal Poly	Jr.	RB	Los Angeles, Calif.
Anthony Norris	Southern Utah	Sr.	FB	Las Vegas, Nev.
Jonathan Gonzales	Portland State	Jr.	K	Apple Valley, Calif.
Connor Strahm	Montana	RSo.	STP	Eugene, Ore.
Ellis Henderson	Montana	RJr.	RS	Vancouver, Wash.
Matt Sommer	Eastern Washington	Jr.	DT	Salem, Ore.
Daniel Fusi	Portland State	Sr.	DT	Santa Ana, Calif.
Mikhail Dubose	Northern Colorado	Jr.	DE	Chicago, Ill.
Brandon Dranka	North Dakota	So.	DE	Huntley, Ill.
Taylor Nelson	Southern Utah	So.	OLB	Vancouver, Wash.
Burton De Koning	Cal Poly	Sr.	OLB	Folsom, Calif.
Matt Holley	Southern Utah	Gr.	ILB	Las Vegas, Nev.
Jeremiah Kose	Montana	RSr.	ILB	Oceanside, Calif.
Nate Harris	Montana	RSr.	CB	Chino, Calif.
Aaron Sibley	Portland State	Sr.	CB	Decatur, Ga.
Todd Raynes	Eastern Washington	Jr.	S	Kenmore, Wash.
Taylor Risner	Northern Colorado	Jr.	S	Wiggins, Colo.
Tate Lewis	Southern Utah	Jr.	P	Plain City, Utah

### Honorable Mention

WR: KW Williams, Idaho State; Ben Roberts, Montana; Darnell Adams, Portland State; Dejzon Walker, Northern Arizona; Justin Brown, Southern Utah; and Chris Martin, UC Davis

OT: Calvin Steyn, Weber State; Andrew Eide, Southern Utah; Parker Smith, UC Davis; Lars Hanson, Sacramento State; and Weston Walker, Cal Poly

OG: Wesley Wingrove, Idaho State; Devon Dietrich, Montana; Randin Crecelius, Portland State; Thomas Gomez, Eastern Washington; Evan Ross, Southern Utah; Joey Kuperman, Cal Poly; and Eric Rodriguez, Northern Arizona

C: Keyan Norman, Southern Utah; Christian Diehm, Idaho State; Blake Porter, Northern Arizona; and Joel Horn, Montana State

TE: Tui Satuala, Weber State, and Michael McCauley, Northern Colorado

QB: Alex Kuresa, Portland State, and Chris Brown, Cal Poly

RB: Jordan Robinson, Sacramento State; Trae Riek, Northern Colorado; John Nguyen, Montana; Malik Brown, Southern Utah; and Eric Wilkes, Weber State

FB: Derek Baljeu, UC Davis, and Cory Thomson, Weber State

PK: Luke Daly, Montana State, and Brady Stuart, UC Davis

STP: Logan Jones, Montana State, and Chris Santini, Cal Poly

RS: Kahlil Dawson, Portland State, and Josh Kelley, UC Davis

DT: Shad Ennis, Southern Utah; Sefesi Va'aivaka, Southern Utah; Marcus Paige-Allen, Cal Poly; and Chuntony Johnson, Northern Colorado

DE: Noah Johnson, North Dakota; Michael Doman, Portland State; Zach McDonnell, Northern Arizona; and Chance Bearnson, Southern Utah

OLB: Kyle Newsom, Northern Colorado; Jake Gall, Eastern Washington; Delvin Batiste, Northern Arizona; and Mac Bignell, Montana State

ILB: Jeremy Lutali, Portland State, and Josh Bamrick, Northern Arizona

CB: Taron Johnson, Weber State; JR Nelson, Montana; and Karlton Dennis, Cal Poly

S: Yamen Sanders, Montana; Walter Santiago, Portland State; and B.J. Nard, Cal Poly

P: Chris Lider, Montana, and Smith Heath, Sacramento State

Offensive Player of the Year: Cooper Kupp, Eastern Washington

Defensive Player of the Year: James Cowser, Southern Utah

Freshmen of the Year: Case Cookus, Northern Arizona; John Santiago, North Dakota

Newcomer of the Year: Alex Kuresa, Portland State

\*Consensus