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## **Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame Narrows 2017 Kareem Abdul-Jabbar Award Watch List to Ten Finalists**

- Friday, February 3, 2017 -

**SPRINGFIELD, MASS.** – The Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame announced today the 10 watch list finalists for the 2017 Kareem Abdul-Jabbar Center of the Year Award. Named after Hall of Famer and three-time NCAA Champion Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, the annual honor in its third year recognizes the top centers in men’s college basketball. A national committee comprised of top college basketball personnel determined the watch list of 20 candidates in October, which has now been narrowed to just 10.

“Kareem Abdul-Jabbar is unquestionably one of the most accomplished centers of all-time,” said John L. Doleva, President and CEO of the Basketball Hall of Fame. “His mindful and spirited approach to the game put him in a class of his own at both the collegiate and professional level and we appreciate his insights as we look to recognize the best centers in the game today.”

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar played for legendary coach John Wooden at the University of California, Los Angeles from 1966-1969. He is a three-time NCAA Champion who earned numerous accolades including three-time Final Four Most Outstanding Player, three-time National College Player of the Year and three-time Consensus First-Team All-American (1967-1969). Abdul-Jabbar is a six-time NBA Champion and a 1995 inductee of the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame.

In March, five finalists will be presented to Mr. Abdul-Jabbar and the Hall of Fame’s selection committee for the 2017 Kareem Abdul-Jabbar Center of the Year Award. The winner of the 2017 Kareem Abdul-Jabbar Award will be presented at ESPN’s College Basketball Awards, presented by Wendy’s, live from The Novo by Microsoft in downtown Los Angeles on Friday, April 7, 2017. Broadcast information will be released at a later date.

Previous winners of the Kareem Abdul-Jabbar Center of the Year Award include Jakob Poeltl, Utah (2016) and Frank Kaminsky, Wisconsin (2015). For more information on the 2017 Kareem Abdul-Jabbar Award, log onto [www.HoophallAwards.com](http://www.HoophallAwards.com).

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## **2017 Kareem Abdul-Jabbar Center of the Year Award Finalists**

Eric Mika	BYU
Justin Patton	Creighton
Yante Maten	Georgia
Przemek Karnowski	Gonzaga
Tim Kempton Jr.	Lehigh
Jock Landale	Saint Mary's
Tacko Fall	UCF
Thomas Welsh	UCLA
Josh Hawkinson	Washington State
Ethan Happ	Wisconsin

*\*Players can play their way onto and off of the list at any point in the 2016-17 season\**

**About the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame:** Located in Springfield, Massachusetts, the city where basketball was invented, the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame promotes and preserves the game of basketball at every level – professional, collegiate and high school, for both men and women on the global stage.

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