

BUTKUS AWARD

Symbolic of the nation's top collegiate linebacker, the Butkus Award was named after former University of Illinois All-American linebacker Dick Butkus. It was presented annually from 1985-2007 to the nation's top collegiate linebacker by the Downtown Athletic Club of Orlando. In April, 2008, Butkus won a court case removing his name from DACO award and giving him the opportunity to begin his own award program. Beginning in 2008, the award was given out by The Butkus Foundation at a celebration in Chicago, Ill.

Considered the greatest linebacker in the history of football, Butkus was a two-time All-America selection in 1963 and 1964. He earned the Silver Football Award in 1963 as the Big Ten's Most Valuable Player after leading the Illini to the Big Ten championship. Butkus moved on to a Hall of Fame career with the Chicago Bears, where he was a six-time All-Pro selection. Butkus finished third in the 1964 Heisman Trophy voting and had his number, 50, retired at Illinois in 1986 and his professional jersey, No. 51, retired in Chicago in 1994.

Butkus helped lead the Illini to a 1964 Rose Bowl victory over Washington and was a two-time

first-team All-Big Ten selection as a linebacker and center. He finished his Illinois career with 373 tackles and was the 1964 National Player of the Year, as selected by the American Football Coaches Association.

Butkus was selected to the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1979, the College Football Hall of Fame in 1983 and the Rose Bowl Hall of Fame in 1995.

In 1994 and 1995, the Butkus Award returned to its Orange and Blue roots with back-to-back



Kevin Hardy (below) and Dana Howard (above) won back-to-back Butkus Awards in 1994-95.

Illini recipients in Dana Howard (1994) and Kevin Hardy (1995). Howard was the Big Ten's leading tackler and a three-time All-Big Ten selection. Hardy exploded onto the national scene as a senior, earning All-America honors in every major publication and All-Big Ten honors for the second consecutive season.

BUTKUS AWARD RECIPIENTS

1985	Brian Bosworth, Oklahoma
1986	Brian Bosworth, Oklahoma
1987	Paul McGowan, Florida State
1988	Derrick Thomas, Alabama
1989	Percy Snow, Michigan State
1990	Alfred Williams, Colorado
1991	Erick Anderson, Michigan
1992	Marvin Jones, Florida State
1993	Trev Alberts, Nebraska
1994	Dana Howard, Illinois
1995	Kevin Hardy, Illinois
1996	Matt Russell, Colorado
1997	Andy Katzenmoyer, Ohio State
1998	Chris Claiborne, USC
1999	LaVar Arrington, Penn State
2000	Dan Morgan, Miami
2001	Rocky Calmus, Oklahoma
2002	E.J. Henderson, Maryland
2003	Teddy Lehman, Oklahoma
2004	Derrick Johnson, Texas
2005	Paul Posluszny, Penn State
2006	Patrick Willis, Ole Miss
2007	James Laurinaitis, Ohio State
2008	Aaron Curry, Wake Forest

