John Mackey Award Names Louisiana Tech's Eli Finley Week 8 Player of the Week

Finley's 128-Yard Performance Leads Louisiana Tech to Shutout Victory; TCU's Kari Ashley and Virginia Tech's Luke Reynolds Earn Honorable Mention Recognition

October 27, 2026 — The John Mackey Award has named **Louisiana Tech tight end Eli Finley** its Week 8 Player of the Week following an outstanding performance in the Bulldogs' commanding 26–0 victory over Old Dominion. TCU's Kari Ashley and Virginia Tech's Luke Reynolds have also earned Honorable Mention recognition for their impressive performances.

PLAYER OF THE WEEK

Eli Finley | Louisiana Tech

10 Receptions | 128 Receiving Yards | 1 Touchdown



Louisiana Tech tight end Eli Finley delivered one of the most complete receiving performances by a tight end this season, hauling in 10 receptions for 128 yards and a touchdown in the Bulldogs' dominant shutout victory over Old Dominion.

Averaging 12.8 yards per reception, Finley demonstrated an impressive combination of reliability, versatility, and playmaking ability. His 10 receptions highlighted his importance to Louisiana Tech's passing attack, consistently providing his quarterback with a dependable target while creating opportunities for the Bulldogs' offense.

Finley's performance builds on what has become an impressive stretch of production. After earning Week 6 Honorable Mention recognition following a nine-reception, 114-yard, two-touchdown performance against Louisiana, Finley continued to establish himself as one of the most productive tight ends in college football.

HONORABLE MENTION

Kari Ashley | TCU

6 Receptions | 118 Receiving Yards

TCU tight end Kari Ashley delivered another explosive performance, recording six receptions for 118 yards while averaging an impressive 19.7 yards per catch.

Ashley's ability to generate significant yardage from the tight end position continues to make him a valuable weapon in TCU's passing attack. His combination of size, athleticism, and downfield receiving ability allows him to create mismatches and stretch opposing defenses.

This marks Ashley's second Honorable Mention recognition of the season, following his Week 5 performance in which he recorded six receptions for 108 yards and a touchdown. With multiple 100-yard receiving performances, Ashley continues to establish himself as one of the most dangerous receiving threats at the position.

Luke Reynolds | Virginia Tech

7 Receptions | 44 Receiving Yards | 2 Touchdowns

Virginia Tech tight end Luke Reynolds delivered another impactful performance, recording seven receptions for 44 yards and two touchdowns, including the **game-winning touchdown** in the Hokies' thrilling 20–16 road victory over Clemson.

While his receiving yardage may not have led the nation's tight ends this week, Reynolds demonstrated why evaluating the position requires looking beyond the stat sheet. His ability to deliver in critical moments, particularly with the game on the line, exemplifies the impact a complete tight end can have on winning football games.

Reynolds has been one of the most consistently recognized tight ends throughout the 2026 season, previously earning Week 2 Honorable Mention recognition and Week 3 Player of the Week honors.

His latest performance further strengthens his standing among the nation's top tight ends, showcasing the combination of reliability, toughness, and competitive spirit that defines the John Mackey Award.

THE EVOLUTION AND IMPACT OF THE TIGHT END POSITION

Through eight weeks of the 2026 college football season, tight ends across the country continue to demonstrate why the position has become one of the most dynamic and valuable in modern football.

This week's honorees represent three different programs and conferences, each showcasing a unique dimension of the position's impact on winning. From Eli Finley's consistent production and ability to serve as a focal point in Louisiana Tech's passing attack to Kari Ashley's explosive downfield playmaking and Luke Reynolds' game-winning touchdown against Clemson, these performances highlight the versatility and importance of today's tight ends.

As the season progresses, the nation's top tight ends continue to prove that their value extends beyond individual statistics. Their ability to create mismatches, deliver in critical moments, and contribute to team success reflects the evolution of a position that John Mackey helped revolutionize.

ABOUT THE JOHN MACKEY AWARD

The **John Mackey Player of the Week** is an honor distinct from the annual John Mackey Award. The weekly honor was established in 2004 to draw attention to outstanding individual performances by tight ends throughout the college football season.

The Player of the Week recognition does not have a direct bearing on the final John Mackey Award selection process. The weekly honor will continue through the announcement of the eight John Mackey Award semifinalists.

The **John Mackey Award** was established in 2000 by the Nassau County Sports Commission and is presented annually to the tight end who performs at the highest level on and off the field.

The John Mackey Award is a member of the **National College Football Awards Association (NCFAA)**, which encompasses the most prestigious awards in college football, dating back to 1935.

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