



For release at 4 p.m., Eastern time, January 6, 2026

NCAA DIVISION II NATIONAL PLAYERS OF THE WEEK – Tuesday, January 6, 2026

Carl Cleveland of Young Harris College and Erin Whalen of Valdosta State University have been selected as this week's national players of the week by the NCAA Division II Conference Information Directors of America for the week of Dec. 29-Jan. 4.

MEN: Carl Cleveland, 6-6, Sr., Young Harris

Hometown: Commerce, Georgia

Cleveland was a one-man force for Young Harris in its two contests last week, averaging 32 points, 10.5 rebounds, two assists and 1.5 steals per game as the Mountain Lions (8-5) split their two outings. In an 84-79 loss to Georgia College, Cleveland went nine-of-16 from the field, including one three-point basket, and six-of-eight at the free throw line to finish with 25 points. He added 10 rebounds, two assists and a steal in that game, then recorded his second double-double of the week as he tied his career high with 39 points in a 101-92 victory over Barton.

In the latter contest, Cleveland was 10-of-19 from the field and 19-of-21 at the free throw line – where he was 25-of-29 in the two games – while tacking on 11 rebounds, two assists and two steals. It was the fourth time this season that he has scored at least 30 points in a game and 11th time in his career at Young Harris, while his 33 career double-doubles are now the most of any active player in NCAA Division II. He shot 54.2 percent from the field (19-of-35) during the week, helping him earn Player of the Week honors in Conference Carolinas.

WOMEN: Erin Whalen, 5-10, Jr., Valdosta State

Hometown: Cumming, Georgia

Whalen had a strong all-around week for the Lady Blazers as they recorded wins over Fort Lauderdale, Mississippi College and Delta State, as she averaged 16.7 points, 11 rebounds, 4.5 assists and 4.5 steals in those contests. After opening the week with a double-double of 13 points and 13 rebounds in a 107-55 win over Fort Lauderdale, she had 19 points, 17 rebounds, six assists and four steals to help VSU defeated Mississippi College 83-57.

On Sunday, Whalen had 18 points on seven-of-13 shooting from the field and two-of-five from three-point range with a pair of free throws as the Lady Blazers downed Delta State 70-62; her three-pointers came in the fourth quarter to allow VSU to extend a four-point into double figures. Whalen finished the week by making 48.7 percent of her field goal attempts (20-of-41), four three-pointers and six-of-seven from the free throw line to earn the Gulf South Conference's Player of the Week award.