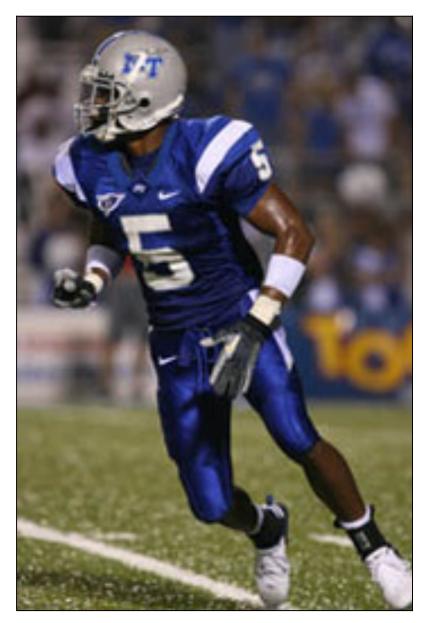
## Nickson named semifinalist for return specialist award

## Junior is one of 18 players recognized

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Murfreesboro, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee defensive back and kickoff return specialist Damon Nickson is a semifinalist for the inaugural Randy Moss Return Man Award as announced by the GameDay Consultants and Gulf Coast Events. Nickson is one of 18 players nationwide to make the list.

The semifinalists, in alphabetical order, are Ray Baum (Iowa St), Darrell Blackman (North Carolina St.), Ross Dickerson (Hawaii), Chris Garrett (Ohio), Jonathan Hefney (Tenn.), Jessie Henderson (SMU), Mikey Henderson (Georgia), DeSean Jackson (California), Grant Jones (Okla. St), Kevin Marion (Wake Forest), Damon Nickson (Middle Tenn. State), Ean Randolph (S. FLA), Lowell Robinson (Pitt), Jeff Smith (Boston College), Sammie Stroughter (Oregon St), Marcus Thigpen (Indiana),



Jeremy Trimble (Army) and Josh Wilson (Maryland).

Nickson, out of Milton, Fla., started taking over the return duties against Louisville and did so in record fashion. On his first career return, Nickson went 88 yards for a touchdown on national television against the No. 8 Cardinals. For the game, Nickson finished with 187 kickoff return yards to set a new school record. Three games later, Nickson recorded his second touchdown when he opened the second half against Florida Atlantic by going 94 yards to record the fifth longest return in

school history. For the season, Nickson has 11 returns for a 35.4-yard average and that figure would lead the NCAA if he had enough attempts.

The award, voted on annually by NCAA Sports Information Directors, will be presented for the first time at the 2007 North South All-Star Classic in Houston, TX, to the Division IA level collegiate athlete who demonstrates exceptional talent and skill in returning punts or kickoffs. Each year, the field of nominees will be the previous year's leaders or finalists who have remaining eligibility and excelled during the course of that season. These individuals should also represent their team and universities with the highest standards of character. Every week during the season, a "watch list" of candidates will be identified who have displayed outstanding statistics to support their candidacy.

The selection of the finalists for the Randy Moss Return Man Award will be December 13, 2006 with the winner being announced and presented at the North South All-Star Classic being played on January 13, 2007 in Houston, Texas. The game, featuring 90 of the nation's finest collegiate seniors, is set for 12:00 p.m. Eastern and will be broadcast live on ESPN2.

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