

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



UConn's Breanna Stewart wins 2016 Senior CLASS Award for women's basketball

OVERLAND PARK, Kan. (April 1, 2016) – Three-time first-team AP All-American Breanna Stewart of the University of Connecticut has been selected as the 2015-16 Senior CLASS Award® winner in NCAA® Division I women's basketball.

The award, chosen by a nationwide vote of Division I women's basketball coaches, national basketball media and fans, is given annually to the most outstanding senior student-athlete in Division I women's basketball. To be eligible for the award, a student-athlete must be classified as an NCAA Division I senior and have notable achievements in four areas of excellence: classroom, community, character and competition.

An acronym for *Celebrating Loyalty and Achievement for Staying in School*®, the Senior CLASS Award focuses on the total student-athlete and encourages students to use their platform in athletics to make a positive impact as leaders in their communities.

"Being recognized as the Senior CLASS Award winner is an unbelievable honor because it highlights more than just my on-the-court skills," said Stewart, a two-time consensus national player of the year who is on the verge of history if she and the Huskies can take their fourth consecutive NCAA Tournament title next week in Indianapolis. "Since I arrived on campus, I've grown in a number of ways, but the biggest one is finding the joy and satisfaction in helping others, whether it is my teammates or people I don't know through various community service activities. Beyond UConn and beyond basketball, I hope one day to create my own non-profit organization, and the Senior CLASS Award is a tremendous milestone and an indication that I'm headed in the right direction."

Unquestionably one of UConn's most dominant forces throughout her career, Stewart has led the Huskies to three National Titles and, in the process, became the first player in NCAA history to earn three Final Four Most Outstanding Player honors. This season, she led the team in scoring, rebounding and blocked shots while surpassing Rebecca Lobo for the most blocked shots in program history and becoming the first women's NCAA Division I player with at least 400 assists and 400 blocked shots. Her status as a three-time first-team AP All-American has only been achieved by five others in NCAA history, and she is already being called the greatest in the storied history of UConn Women's Basketball.

“When ‘Stewie’ came to UConn as a freshman, she obviously had all the talent in the world, and through a lot of hard work has become the best player in the country,” said UConn Head Coach Geno Auriemma, a seven-time AP Coach of the Year. “But what makes me the proudest is to have watched her growth off the court. She set a goal to become a better student and was honored as an Academic All-American last season. She saw just how much people love being around her and the impact that she could have on those less fortunate than her, and she became more and more involved with community service efforts. She also blossomed into a great teammate and leader on our team, so I think she represents everything that this prestigious award stands for.”

Stewart’s commitment to excellence both on and off the court have been well-noted throughout her career. In her pursuit of an individualized sport in society degree, Stewart earned second-team Academic All-American nods last season and was named to both the UConn Athletic Director’s Honor Roll and Dean’s List. Also known for her humility, she has helped her team reach out to the community, participating in efforts benefiting terminally ill children, senior citizens, cancer patients and local shelters.

“Breanna Stewart is one of the most talented women’s basketball players ever to compete at the college level,” said Erik Miner, executive director for the Senior CLASS Award. “But what’s even more amazing about her is that she doesn’t just strive to be the best on the court, but also in the classroom and community. She is incredibly deserving of the Senior CLASS Award, and we offer our congratulations to Breanna, her family, her team and her university.”

For more information on all the finalists, visit seniorCLASSaward.com.

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Senior CLASS Award First-Team All-Americans

Ruth Hamblin, Oregon State

Moriah Jefferson, Connecticut

Kelsey Minato, Army West Point

Tiffany Mitchell, South Carolina

Breanna Stewart, Connecticut

Senior CLASS Award Second-Team All-Americans

Jillian Alleyne, Oregon

Adut Bulgak, Florida State

Aundrea Gamble, Arkansas State

Bria Holmes, West Virginia

Jonquel Jones, George Washington

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ABOUT THE AWARD

An acronym for *Celebrating Loyalty and Achievement for Staying in School*, the Senior CLASS Award honors the attributes of senior student-athletes in four areas: community, classroom, character and competition. The award program is designed exclusively for college seniors who are utilizing their complete athletic eligibility, remaining committed to their university and pursuing the many rewards a senior season can bring. Premier Sports Management manages the award.

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