

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Boise State's Kekaula Kaniho wins 2020 Senior CLASS Award® for FBS Football

OVERLAND PARK, Kan. (December 30, 2020) – Boise State defensive back Kekaula Kaniho has been selected as the 2020 Senior CLASS Award® winner for the NCAA® Division I Football Bowl Subdivision. The award, chosen by a nationwide vote of Division I FBS football coaches, national football media and fans, is given annually to the most outstanding senior student-athlete in Division I football. 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 make a positive impact as leaders in their communities. Kaniho is the first student-athlete from Boise State to win the Senior CLASS Award.

"Being a student-athlete has taught me skills and lessons that will be the foundation for my career after football. As a student-athlete, I have connected with diverse people and have worked side by side with them daily to accomplish a common goal," said Kaniho, who led Boise State to a (5-2) regular-season record during his senior season in a Broncos uniform. "Along this journey, I have developed vital life skills such as leadership, communication, accountability, commitment and perseverance. These skills, as well as many others, are universal and applicable in any career that I choose to pursue."

Kaniho helped lead Boise State to a bowl game in each of his first three years on campus, but the team opted to forego a potential bowl game this season. He has been a key piece of a highly successful Boise State program and is a two-time Mountain West Champion (2017-18 and 2019-20) and a 2017-18 Las Vegas Bowl Champion. Kaniho's 32 total tackles and team leading seven passes defended this season helped earn a 2020 Mountain West second-team honor, one year after earning a spot on the first-team.

Kaniho is also an excellent student in the classroom. He carries a 3.94 GPA, majoring in health science, and is a three-time Academic All-Mountain West honoree and Mountain West Scholar-Athlete Award recipient. He returned to Boise State for his senior year after earning 2019-20 CoSIDA Division 1 Academic All-America Football second team and 2019-20 CoSIDA Academic All-District 7 Football Team honors.

Kaniho is one of 12 finalists for the 2020 William V. Campbell Trophy, which recognizes an individual as the best in the nation for his combined academic success, football performance and exemplary leadership. He is also one of 24 finalists for the 2020 Lott Impact Trophy, which recognizes the top defensive college football player who demonstrates excellence in the field of athletics and exemplifies the IMPACT acronym: Integrity, Maturity, Performance, Academics, Community and Tenacity.

"Boise State develops student-athletes on and off the field from the time they step on campus, to the time they leave and beyond. Understanding the process that it takes to be successful in all aspects of life is at the forefront of Boise State Athletics," said Boise State defensive coordinator Jeff Schmedding. "Kekaula has maximized his opportunities at Boise State and not only developed himself, but has become a leader and helped develop his fellow Broncos."

Kaniho has been extremely active in the Boise State community outside of football. During his four years on campus, he visited local middle and elementary schools and was a great role model to younger students. He discussed healthy lifestyles, good sportsmanship and the benefits that play can have for everyone. Kaniho also participates with the football program's "Broncos vs. Bullying" anti-bullying campaign.

"Kekaula Kaniho is the ideal representative of a student-athlete that excels in every aspect of collegiate athletics," said Erik Miner, executive director for the Senior CLASS Award. "Kekaula's ability to succeed on the football field, in the classroom and in his personal life make him an esteemed role model in the Boise State community. His coaches, teammates, fans and family should be proud to have Kekaula representing their university through his relentless leadership. We would like to offer our congratulations to Kekaula for winning this prestigious award."

For more information, visit seniorCLASSaward.com.

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First-Team Senior CLASS Award All-Americans:

Robert Hainsey, University of Notre Dame

Kekaula Kaniho, Boise State University

Kwity Paye, University of Michigan

Kyle Trask, University of Florida

Brady White, University of Memphis

Second-Team Senior CLASS Award All-Americans:

Ian Book, University of Notre Dame

Shane Buechele, Southern Methodist University

Greg Eisworth, Iowa State University

Tarron Jackson, Coastal Carolina University

Chazz Surratt, University of North Carolina

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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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