

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



# Pittsburgh's Kenny Pickett Wins 2021 Senior CLASS Award for FBS Football

**OVERLAND PARK, Kan. (December 29, 2021)** - All-American Kenny Pickett of the University of Pittsburgh has been selected as the 2021 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 FBS football.

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. To be eligible for the award, a student-athlete must be classified as an NCAA Division I senior or graduate student and have notable achievements in four areas of excellence: classroom, community, character, and competition.

"As student-athletes at the University of Pittsburgh, it is continually impressed upon us to be multi-dimensional. We are far more than just football players, and we should always strive to achieve and impact the world well beyond the field," said Kenny Pickett, the first student-athlete from Pittsburgh to receive the award. "I am so thankful for those lessons and experiences because I know it will serve me throughout my life. That's why I am so incredibly honored to be the 2021 Senior CLASS Award recipient. To be recognized for achievement in those four areas - classroom, community, character and competition - is really the highest honor. Although my name is on the award, it really is a tribute to the many people who invested their time and talents in me while I was at Pitt, including my coaches, teammates, professors and our university administrators."

From Oakhurst, New Jersey, Pickett used his first season on campus to improve his craft and learn behind his teammates. Even though he was third on the depth chart, Pickett started one game and appeared in three others. He became the first true freshman to start a game at Pittsburgh since Pat Bostick (2007) and totaled three touchdowns in a 24-14 upset win over the undefeated and No. 2-ranked Miami Hurricanes.

Pickett earned the starting role in his second season with the Panthers. They finished atop of the ACC Coastal division - with Pickett recording 1,969 passing yards, 220 rushing yards, and 15 total touchdowns along the way. Pittsburgh received an invitation to play in the Sun Bowl after finishing the season 7-7, where they faced Stanford in a tight game.

Pickett was able to improve upon his first season as a starter the following year. Leading Pittsburgh to another bowl appearance, he threw for 3,098 and 15 total touchdowns on the season. Pickett was named MVP of the Quick Lane Bowl after tallying 361 passing yards and three touchdowns against Eastern Michigan in the season finale.

In his fourth year as a Panther, Pickett was named a team captain for the first time in his career. Even though he missed two games to injury, Pickett still managed to compile 2,408 passing yards and 21 total touchdowns through nine games. He became the first quarterback to lead the team in rushing touchdowns (8) since Billy Daniels accomplished that feat in 1973.

Electing to return for a fifth season in 2021, Pickett cemented his legacy as one of the best to ever suit up for the Blue & Gold. He led Pittsburgh to an 11-2 record as they were crowned champions of the ACC Coastal division and also won the ACC Championship for the first time in program history. Pickett, who held a 165.3 quarterback rating, was named the ACC Player of the Year after setting a conference record for touchdown passes (42) in a season. He was just as good in comparison to his peers throughout the country, finishing third in the NCAA in passing touchdowns and fifth in passing yards (4,319).

Pickett was named an All-American by multiple media organizations for his tremendous play this season and was chosen as a first team selection by the AFCA and the Walter Camp Football Foundation. He received the Johnny Unitas Golden Arm Award, which is given to the nation's top senior or fourth-year junior quarterback, and was also a finalist for the Maxwell Award, Manning Award, Walter Camp Award, and Davey O'Brien National QB Award. Pittsburgh sits third in the country in scoring per game (43.0) and fifth in total offense per game (502.9 yards). Pickett's season culminated in New York, where he received a third-place finish for the Heisman Trophy.

Pickett has etched his name in the Pittsburgh record-books a little more each year. In large part because of his incredible fifth season, Pickett is now the program leader in passing touchdowns (81), total touchdowns (102), passing completions (1,045), passing yardage (12,303), and total offense (13,112) - breaking a few of the legendary Dan Marino's records along the way.

Pickett has also managed to remain committed to his studies - even as he excelled each year on the field. He received his bachelor's degree in marketing from the University of Pittsburgh and is enrolled in the Katz Graduate School of Business for his fifth year on campus.

In addition to all of his other responsibilities as a student-athlete, Pickett has continued to be a staple in the community from the moment he arrived on campus. He has volunteered with multiple organizations, including Dollar Energy Fund, Make-A-Wish, and the Voting Matters campaign. Pickett has also donated his per diem as a student-athlete so that local youth teams have the resources necessary to purchase bottled water for practices and games.

Pickett has been lauded for his approach to the new name, image, and likeness legislation as well. He has helped his teammates garner opportunities and participated in initiatives with the Boys & Girls Club during the inaugural season of the policy.

“Kenny Pickett truly represents all of the qualities that make the Senior CLASS Award so great,” said Pat Narduzzi, head coach of the Panthers. “On and off the field, Kenny set a high standard that inspired our entire program. He is incredibly deserving of this honor and I have no doubt that he will continue to make us proud in all that he does beyond Pitt.”

“Kenny Pickett has succeeded in fulfilling the greatest of expectations that a student-athlete can have,” said Erik Miner, Executive Director of the Senior CLASS Award. “He has created a standard for others to follow at the University of Pittsburgh and deserves all of the recognition he has received for his terrific season. We are proud to offer our congratulations to Kenny for winning this award.”

For more information on the finalists, visit [SeniorCLASSAward.com](http://SeniorCLASSAward.com).

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## **2021 Senior CLASS Award FBS Football First Team All-Americans**

**Thomas Booker**, Stanford

**Sean Clifford**, Penn State

**Jordan Davis**, Georgia

**Aidan Hutchinson**, Michigan

**Kenny Pickett**, Pittsburgh

## **2021 Senior CLASS Award FBS Football Second Team All-Americans**

**Blake Hayes**, Illinois

**Hayden Howerton**, SMU

**Silas Kelly**, Coastal Carolina

**Chris Olave**, Ohio State

**Brock Purdy**, Iowa State

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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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