



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Navy's Sydney Fortson Wins 2019 Senior CLASS Award[®] for Women's Soccer

OVERLAND PARK, Kan. (December 5, 2019) – U.S. Naval Academy goalkeeper Sydney Fortson has been selected in nationwide balloting as the 2019 Senior CLASS Award[®] winner in NCAA[®] Division I women's soccer.

The award, chosen by a vote of Division I women's soccer coaches, national soccer media and fans, is given annually to the most outstanding senior student-athlete in Division I women's soccer. In order 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 was inspired by Duke men's basketball player Shane Battier and his decision to forego the NBA to remain in school all four years. Established in 2001, the award is presented in 10 NCAA sports and focuses on the total student-athlete, encouraging students to use their platform in athletics to make a positive impact as leaders in their communities.

"This award means the world to me, and I cannot give enough thanks to each and every person who has helped me along the way," said Fortson, the second Navy student-athlete to win the award after quarterback Ricky Dobbs won for football in 2010. "Going to school at a place like the United States Naval Academy has provided me with a great platform to try to excel in these areas. There is a strong focus at USNA on personal and professional development, as well as putting others before yourself. Additionally, Navy Women's Soccer (NWS) has always been a program that prides itself on producing not just athletes, but well-rounded individuals fit to lead on and off the field. My coaches and support staff have always encouraged our team to find different ways to step out of our comfort zones and to push ourselves to be the best we can be. In the future, I hope to take all the lessons and experiences through USNA and NWS to maintain the highest of standards in all aspects of my life and naval career."

On the pitch, Fortson has served as the Mids' starting goalkeeper for three consecutive seasons. As a sophomore in 2017, she started all 21 games of the season, posting a 0.90 goals against average (GAA) and a .804 save percentage with a 16-4-1 record en route to Patriot League Goalkeeper of the Year and All-East Regional Second Team

honors. As a junior in 2018, she dropped her GAA to 0.85 and went 11-6-3 on her way to an All-Patriot League Third Team nod. This season, Fortson was selected to the All-Patriot League First Team after posting a 13-3-3 record, 0.60 GAA and 76.9 save percentage with 10 shutouts. In the Navy record books, her 0.60 GAA and 10 shutout totals from 2019 rank fourth all-time in both single-season categories. In the career categories, her 0.82 GAA is fourth all-time, while her 27 shutouts are the second-most in program history.

Off the field, Fortson has thrived in the classroom as an aerospace engineering major, earning two CoSIDA Academic All-America honors (2017, 2018). Through six semesters at the U.S. Naval Academy, Fortson has posted a 3.91 cumulative GPA and been named to the Supt's List six times as one of the USNA's top students in the areas of academics, military and physical readiness. She currently ranks top-20 in both the Naval Academy's Military Order of Merit and Overall Order of Merit for the Class of 2020, and she was named the Patriot League Women's Soccer Scholar-Athlete of the Year in both 2018 and 2019.

“It was an absolute honor and privilege to coach Sydney Fortson for four years at the United States Naval Academy,” said Head Coach Carin Gabarra, who just completed her 27th season at the helm for the Midshipmen. “Syd is a talented athlete, but also an exceptional leader and person. Her consistent pursuit of excellence in all areas of her life is what makes her special. Her passion to make a difference in her community, immense drive in the classroom, consistent standard of character and fiercely competitive nature make her an excellent candidate for the Senior CLASS award. Syd will continue to serve and inspire others in her career path and future endeavors.”

In addition to her competition and classroom responsibilities, Fortson has made community outreach a consistent priority. As team captain for the Mids, Fortson played a leading role in a number of the program's community service efforts. She and her teammates have supported GiGi's Playhouse, a Down Syndrome Achievement Center in Annapolis, and also have volunteered with the Honor Flight program. The Midshipmen have traveled to Reagan National Airport to welcome military veterans as they arrived into Washington, D.C., and Fortson and the Mids also have participated regularly in Special Olympics events that are hosted annually at the Academy.

“Sydney is an outstanding leader and all-around student-athlete,” said Erik Miner, executive director for the Senior CLASS Award. “Not only has she excelled both on and off the field, she's done so while helping lead Navy to one of its best seasons in program history. Her accomplishments and her character are worth rewarding, and we congratulate Sydney, her team and the entire Academy on this honor.”

For more information, visit seniorCLASSaward.com.

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First-Team Senior CLASS Award All-Americans

Kaylee Dao, Oklahoma
Jessie Fleming, UCLA
Sydney Fortson, U.S. Naval Academy
Maureen Kennedy, Bowling Green
Ally Watt, Texas A&M

Second-Team Senior CLASS Award All-Americans

Kate Del Fava, Illinois State
Samantha Dewey, Xavier
Alli Klug, Saint Louis
Meaghan Nally, Georgetown
Evelyne Viens, South Florida

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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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