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COLLEGE FOOTBALL ASSISTANCE FUND AWARDS GRANT TO INJURED UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI‘I FOOTBALL PLAYER

August 3, 2017 (Honolulu, HI) – Today, the **College Football Assistance Fund (CFAF)** announced that a grant of \$10,000.00 will be awarded to University of Hawai‘i football player Kalepo Naotala to help with medical and non-medical costs while undergoing rehab for a spinal cord injury.



Naotala, a freshman from Virginia who grey-shirted in 2016, suffered a serious spinal cord injury on July 1, 2017 while diving with friends near Waikiki in Honolulu. He was rescued from the water, and had been receiving treatment at The Queen's Medical Center. Recently, however, he was transferred to Craig Hospital in Englewood, Colorado for further rehabilitation.

“On behalf of the University of Hawai‘i, we wish to extend our appreciation to the College Football Assistance Fund for their generosity and support of Kalepo,” Athletics Director David Matlin said. “This gift will make a big difference in assisting the Naotala family in Kalepo’s road to recovery.”

Naotala's medical costs will continue rising, meaning fundraising efforts must continue. Those able to assist can make donations at www.CFAFund.org, which will be put in a restricted fund for Kalepo and his family.

“As unfortunate of an incident as it was for Kalepo, the outpouring of support has been amazing,” head coach Nick Rolovich said. “With the help of the College Football Assistance Fund and many others who have generously supported the Naotala family, it will make their journey a little easier.”

STATEMENT FROM THE NAOTALA FAMILY:

“Words can't express how blessed we've been in the midst of this trying time for our family. The outpouring of God's love and grace through prayers, love and support from Virginia to Hawaii and now Colorado has been tremendous! We'd like to thank the College Football Assistance Fund (CFAF) for their support and generous donation in allowing our family to focus on Kalepo and his recovery & rehabilitation. We are grateful and appreciative that such an organization exists and is able to help us out during this critical time in our son's life.”

Fa'afetai Lava/Mahalo,
Tony & Shantell Naotala

ABOUT CFAF

The College Football Assistance Fund (CFAF) is a non-profit tax-exempt organization dedicated to the support of football players. Assistance is provided to ease the burden of medical costs associated with injuries such as joint replacement, spine treatment, neurological care and other related expenses.

The CFAF was established in 2010 by a group of collegiate coaches and athletic administrators concerned about the limited resources available to injured football players. Major donors include some of today's top college football coaches and Bowls.

For more information about CFAF, please visit www.CFAFund.org.

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Here are some of the College Football Players we have helped...



Eric LeGrand

The CFAF was inspired by Rutgers University football player Eric LeGrand, who experienced a life-changing spinal cord injury during a game against Army in 2010. The first grant was made to help Eric modify his home for his new condition.



Devon Walker

Tulane University's Devon Walker collapsed after an accidental helmet-to-helmet hit during a 2012 game against Tulsa. He suffered a spine fracture, dramatically altering his life, and that of his family. The CFAF provided a grant to help ease the cost of family travel.



Budge Porter

Former University of Nebraska football player Budge Porter suffered a catastrophic neck dislocation during a Cornhusker practice in 1976, which led to paralysis. A CFAF grant helped Budge build his first fully wheelchair-accessible home.



Jeremy Ioane

Jeremy Ioane, from Boise State University, is battling an autoimmune disease which is affecting his kidneys and will need a kidney transplant. The CFAF provided a grant to a fund that was created to help him and his family pay for the expenses that won't be covered by insurance.



Donnie Salum

Donnie Salum, a former University of Arizona linebacker, was recently diagnosed with an extremely rare form of bone tumor at the base of his skull, touching his brain stem. A CFAF grant was made to assist with medical costs.



Tyrell Williams

Tyrell, a linebacker for the Georgetown Hoyas, was transferred to the Shepard center after enduring nine hours of surgery. He received a spinal fusion, inserted rods and a prosthetic intervertebral disc. The CFAF grant helped his parents & brother be with him during this time.



Sterling Thomas

Sterling Thomas, a defensive back at Lindenwood University in Missouri, suffered a paralyzing spinal cord injury during a 2012 game versus Missouri Southern. The CFAF provided a grant to Thomas to help cover the cost of home modifications.



Devon Gales

Devon Gales, from Southern University, suffered a severe spinal injury in 2015, during a game in Georgia. He underwent successful surgery and was then transferred to the Shepherd Center in Atlanta. The CFAF grant helped the Gales family cover travel and loss-of-income expenses following the injury.