



NATIONAL FOOTBALL  
FOUNDATION  
MINNESOTA CHAPTER

**For Immediate Release:**

**MN CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES  
MINNESOTA FOOTBALL HONORS 2015 COURAGE AWARD WINNER**

*Josh Benson, Hinckley-Finlayson High School*

**MINNEAPOLIS, MN - March 4, 2014** - The Minnesota Chapter of The National Football Foundation is excited to announce the 2015 Courage Award winner, Josh Benson, to be recognized at the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Minnesota Football Honors on May 3 at the Hilton Minneapolis.

Benson, a running back for Hinckley-Finlayson High School, saw his 2014 football season end before the first game even started. He and the Jaguars were in the midst of the preseason practice schedule when a four-wheeler ride on a Saturday in August changed his life.

While riding the vehicle with his girlfriend, Benson noticed something go wrong. He was able to push his girlfriend off the vehicle to safety before it crashed. Unfortunately, Benson did not have time to remove himself from danger. The accident left him paralyzed from the waist down and he underwent an eight-hour surgery which placed rods and screws in his lower back. Benson has not let the injury keep him down. Through physical therapy and perseverance, he is now able to get around in a wheelchair and even walk with the assistance of braces on his legs and arms.

"Upon our first complete week of football practice and finally being able to tackle and hit, Josh was forced to tackle another obstacle in life, being paralyzed waist down," Hinckley-Finlayson HS Head Football Coach Brad Hopkins said. "Josh sustained a broken back in an unfortunate ATV accident. I will never forget our conversation as he told me that he could not play football anymore. This award is for courage. The courage and respect he showed calling me that night, paralyzed. Josh has tackled this new obstacle in his life with full force. He has made strides being more mobile and has tried his best to do the things he loves. Courage: the desire to tackle that unknown obstacle and to deal with what life has given you. That is Josh. I don't think he knows any other way."

For his strength in facing his adversity, Benson has been named the Courage Award winner by The Minnesota Chapter of the National Football Foundation.

The 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Minnesota Football Honors, presented by the Minnesota Vikings, will take place Sunday, May 3, 2015 at Hilton Minneapolis. College and professional football Hall of Fame inductees are scheduled to attend the event, and WCCO-TV news personality Frank Vascellaro will return for his eighth year as Master of Ceremonies. The event is open to the public. To register or for additional information about this year's Minnesota Football Honors, please visit [www.minnesotafootballhonors.com](http://www.minnesotafootballhonors.com). For sponsorship information, please email [lindsay@nffmn.org](mailto:lindsay@nffmn.org).

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**About the Minnesota Chapter of the National Football Foundation:**

The Minnesota Chapter of The National Football Foundation & College Hall of Fame is a local non-profit organization whose mission is to promote and develop the power of amateur football in developing the qualities of leadership, sportsmanship, competitive spirit and academic excellence in Minnesota's young people. The MN Chapter recognizes

legendary football icons, college football Hall of Famers and Minnesota's top high school and college football scholar athletes. For more information, visit [www.nffmn.org](http://www.nffmn.org), [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).

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