



For Immediate Release:

CASEY O'BRIEN TO RECEIVE MINNESOTA FOOTBALL HONORS COURAGE AWARD

MINNEAPOLIS, MN – February 8, 2016 - Casey O'Brien did not let cancer keep him off the gridiron. For his perseverance and positive attitude, the Minnesota Chapter of the National Football Foundation will recognize the Cretin-Derham Hall junior as the recipient of the Minnesota Football Honors Courage Award. O'Brien will receive the award at the 9th Annual Minnesota Football Honors on April 17 at the Hilton Minneapolis.

Bothered by knee pain as a freshman, O'Brien received a diagnosis of osteosarcoma. He underwent surgery and chemotherapy to fend off the bone cancer. Cancer returned in 2015, this time in both O'Brien's lungs.

Immediately after his initial cancer diagnosis, doctors thought O'Brien would never play sports again. But during a month in which had surgery to clean out his lungs, O'Brien took to the field between chemo sessions as a holder. He held three extra points in the Raiders' season-opening win. He played in five total games during the season, sometimes just one or two days after leaving the hospital from a round of chemo.

"Few of us can begin to imagine the burden that the diagnosis of cancer and its related treatment placed on Casey," said Mike Scanlan, O'Brien's coach at CDH last year. "When this harsh reality was laid on Casey, he had several ways he could choose to respond, not all of them healthy or positive. Instead of disappearing and feeling sorry for himself, he decided to be a contributing member of our football team. When he was physically able to, he attended every practice and earned the job of holding for extra points and field goals. He also earned the respect of his teammates and was named game captain for our first game. When some thought Casey might not be able to even attend our games, he proved them wrong and played a key role in our team's success. This award gives us a small opportunity to thank Casey for the strength and courage that he shared with us daily. We are truly honoring one of CDH's finest."

During both bouts with cancer O'Brien wrote optimistic updates on his CaringBridge site. His enthusiasm for football never wavered. O'Brien continued to support his Cretin-Derham team and the Minnesota Golden Gophers, for whom his father, Dan, is now a member of the coaching staff.

When he was not able to attend school in person, O'Brien often took part in classes via webcam. He has maintained a 3.5 GPA or better in each term, even after undergoing 10 surgeries in two years.

The 9th Annual Minnesota Football Honors event is presented by the Minnesota Vikings. College and professional football Hall of Fame inductees are scheduled to attend, and WCCO-TV news personality Frank Vascellaro will return for his ninth 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.minnesotafotballhonors.com. For sponsorship information, please email lindsay@nffmn.org.

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.minnesotafotballhonors.com, [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).

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