

Inspirational Purdue University Football Super Fan Tyler Trent Named 2018 Disney Spirit Award Winner

Courageous and compassionate sports fan determined to live life on his own terms

The 2018 Disney Spirit Award will be presented to Tyler Trent, the courageous former Purdue University student who has inspired a football team and thousands of fans nationwide with the fearless way he has faced his cancer diagnosis.

The award is presented annually by Disney Sports to college football's most inspirational figure. Disney Sports Vice President Faron Kelley will present the award at **The Home Depot College Football Awards**, televised live on ESPN Dec. 6 at 7 p.m. ET at the College Football Hall of Fame in Atlanta.

"Tyler's spirit is amazing," Kelley said. "His tenacity and commitment to making life better for others dealing with similar circumstances all while waging his own personal battle with cancer should be an inspiration to us all. That's why we salute Tyler as the 2018 recipient of the Disney Spirit Award."

Trent, a 20-year-old native of Carmel, Indiana, was first diagnosed with bone cancer in 2015. He underwent nine months of grueling chemotherapy, sending his cancer into remission. But two years later, as he was set to enroll as a freshman at Purdue, the cancer returned. Despite having his pelvis surgically replaced, he still managed to start classes at Purdue on time – a testament to his unwavering spirit.

Guided by his strong faith and driven by family support, friends and a growing legion of fans, which include politicians, sports television personalities, national radio talk show hosts and professional athletes, Trent is living life on his own terms.

In September 2017, when Michigan was coming to town to face Purdue, Trent – despite his condition – did what many football-crazed fans do before big games: he camped out on campus in hopes of being the first Purdue student in line to get tickets for the game.

Boilermakers Head Coach Jeff Brohm noticed him in line and quickly struck up a conversation, which led to Trent later becoming a fixture within the football program and an honorary team captain for various games.

"I saw a guy dressed head to toe in Purdue garb," Brohm said. "I remember he had a big smile on his face. He didn't tell me his story. He didn't tell me what he was going through. He just had a positive attitude and brought a lot of life to the conversation."

Trent's inspirational story has been profiled by *USA Today*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Forbes*, *ESPN.com* and The Big Ten Network. He has also been a guest on Scott Van Pelt's national ESPN radio show.

While waging his own battle with cancer, Trent has found a way to give back to others. He partnered with ESPN and The V Foundation as a spokesman to help raise money for cancer treatments and recently started an organization – **Teens with a Cause** – that recruits kids for service projects to help families affected by cancer (mowing lawns, raking leaves, shoveling snow, etc.).

Trent joins 22 past honorees, including James Connor (University of Pittsburgh, 2016), Hank Goff (Concordia-St. Paul University, 2015), Bob Stoops and Sterling Shepard (University of Oklahoma, 2014), Devon Walker (Tulane University, 2013), Nate Boyer (University of Texas, 2012), Carson Tinker and the entire University of Alabama football team (2011), D.J. Williams (University of Arkansas, 2010), Mark Herzlich (Boston College, 2009) and Tim Tebow (University of Florida, 2008), among others. The award was first given in 1996 to Rossville High School's Daniel Huffman.

Kelley will present the award during ***The Home Depot College Football Awards on Dec. 6***, airing on ESPN at 7 p.m. ET. The show – hosted by ESPN's Chris Fowler; and joined by Lee Corso, Kirk Herbstreit, Desmond Howard, Maria Taylor and Tom Rinaldi – will originate from the College Football Hall of Fame and Chick-fil-A Fan Experience in Atlanta.

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- **Media Note:** Media interested in attending The Home Depot College Football Awards Show can apply for credentials by contacting Kimberly Elchlepp at Kimberly.M.Elchlepp@espn.com.