

Kentucky JJ Weaver Earns Freddie Solomon Spirit Award

24 52N KENTUCKY FOOTBALL

FREDDIE SOLOMON COMMUNITY *Spirit Award*



J.J. WEAVER
PREMIER
PLAYERS

WINNER

UK
NATIONAL
BIG
BLUE

J.J. WEAVER FREDDIE SOLOMON COMMUNITY SPIRIT AWARD WINNER

Tampa, Florida Jun 27, 2025 ([Issuewire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - J.J. Weaver, a graduate outside linebacker for the University of Kentucky, exemplifies the spirit of community and resilience, earning him the prestigious 2024 Freddie Solomon Community Spirit Award. A native of Louisville, Kentucky, Weaver was born with polydactyly, a condition where he has six fingers on his right hand. As a child, he faced bullying for being different but refused to let it define him. His college years brought even greater adversity: he endured the tragic loss of his father to homicide, a season-ending knee injury, and the death of his high school coach to cancer—all within a span of 13 months.

Struggling with grief and anger, Weaver found strength through counseling, encouraged by Kentucky head coach Mark Stoops and then-athletic trainer Gabe Amponsah. The transformative impact of therapy inspired Weaver to become a vocal advocate for mental health, using his platform to break stigmas and encourage others to seek help.

“Through his unwavering dedication to service and mental health advocacy, Weaver has used his personal challenges as fuel to make a profound difference in the lives of others,” says Carnell Moore, founder of the Premier Players Sports Foundation. “We are very proud to recognize him for his off-field efforts.

Weaver’s advocacy led to the creation of “The Perfect Fit Support Group,” an eight-week, peer-led grief counseling initiative launched on the University of Kentucky campus in the fall of 2023. The program, developed with the Kentucky Center for Grieving Children and Families, became the first of its kind at UK. Thanks to Weaver’s dedication, the program secured a \$40,000 grant from Women in Philanthropy and will expand to serve all UK students starting in the fall of 2024.

Beyond campus, Weaver has shared his story and insights at events like the “Supporting Children and Teens Through Loss” workshop and the National Alliance for Children’s Grief Symposium. Through these efforts, he has become a beacon of hope and inspiration for those navigating loss and hardship.

[JJ Weaver](#)’s contributions extend far beyond mental health advocacy. He has tirelessly served communities in Lexington and Louisville through a variety of initiatives such as football camps, back-to-school drives, bike donations, free haircuts, and diversity talks for kids.

According to Delilah “Dee” Solomon, the widow of Mr. Solomon, Weaver’s journey is one of courage, determination, and selflessness. His ability to turn personal challenges into opportunities for community impact embodies the very essence of the Freddie Solomon Community Spirit Award.

ABOUT THE AWARD: Freddie Solomon played his college football at the University of Tampa and went on to play for the Miami Dolphins for three seasons before joining the San Francisco 49ers where he helped win two Super Bowl championships. His career in the National Football League as a wide receiver ended after 11 years. Then the Sumter, SC, native known as “Fabulous Freddie”, came back to Hillsborough County to make a more lasting impact. Solomon devoted the next 12 years of his life to the youths of Tampa Bay, working with the Sheriff’s department to teach kids life lessons through football. His efforts impacted more than two decades of youth and his lessons are still carried on in the community. The Freddie Solomon Community Spirit Award continues Solomon’s efforts to help make the world a better place by annually honoring a collegiate football player who has impacted the lives of others through giving and community service.

Each college football season colleges and universities submit candidates for the Freddie Solomon Community Spirit Award via an e-mail to editor@premierplayers.com. The e-mail contains details of the candidate’s grade point average, recent community involvement, and why the candidate should receive

the award. All nominations are then given to The Solomon Family to determine which player receives the award

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