

MINNESOTA VIKINGS
NEWS RELEASE



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**ERIC KENDRICKS NAMED MINNESOTA VIKINGS 2020
WALTER PAYTON MAN OF THE YEAR NOMINEE**

Winner to be announced at NFL Honors the week of Super Bowl LV

Eagan, Minn. (December 10, 2020) – The Minnesota Vikings announced today LB **Eric Kendricks** has been named the team's nominee for the **2020 WALTER PAYTON NFL MAN OF THE YEAR AWARD**. Considered the league's most prestigious honor, the *Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year Award* presented by Nationwide recognizes an NFL player for outstanding community service activities off the field, as well as excellence on the field. Each of the league's 32 nominees were [announced today](#).

"Eric is a special person who makes the entire Vikings organization proud by displaying his heart for our community," said Vikings Owner/President **Mark Wilf**. "We have a strong history with our Man of the Year nominees, and Eric certainly belongs in this group. Eric has proven to be a great player but he is an even better man. The need for community involvement has never been greater, and Eric has accepted that challenge and led by his thoughts, words and actions. We are honored to have Eric as our Walter Payton Man of the Year nominee."

A passionate leader off the field, Kendricks pushed himself to make a meaningful impact during an unprecedented time in our society. As a key member of the **Vikings Social Justice Committee** since 2018, Kendricks has made a tremendous difference during 2020 in numerous ways. He recently presented **All Square**, a professional development institute which helps formerly incarcerated individuals, with a \$250,000 grant from the Vikings Social Justice Committee. Kendricks has visited All Square many times and has formed a bond with their staff and Fellows as he looks to educate everyone on his fight against recidivism. He has spent time with local youth who are housed at the **Hennepin County Juvenile Detention Center** while offering support, guidance and serving as an inspiration. While in-person visits are on hold, Kendricks has kept up with these individuals monthly via virtual visits and written letters. He also visited detained juveniles in his home state of California. Recognizing that food insecurity is a major issue in Minnesota, Kendricks has raised funds and partnered with **Every Meal** for several seasons to bring food to those in need. As someone who experienced childhood hunger he knows a better present can enable a brighter future. Kendricks has been a leading voice in the fight for social justice. Following the killing of George Floyd, he sat down with **Minneapolis Police Chief Medaria Arradondo** to better understand the problems our community is facing and help facilitate change. Kendricks has spoken to **NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell** to discuss how the League and players can work together to achieve social justice and has used his platform to inspire others and help be the change in our community.

"I feel blessed to accept this nomination on behalf of the Vikings organization. This is something I didn't do alone, and I appreciate all of my teammates who are out in the community with me and trying to make positive changes in the world," said **Kendricks**. This award wasn't something I sought after. There were times when I needed help when I was younger and people helped me. So now I try to help people as much as I can. We are all people who want the same basic things that everybody wants. When you think about other people in that way, that we are all a lot more alike than different, good comes from that."

For Vikings Man of the Year assets and additional Eric Kendricks' digital community assets, [click here](#).

A second-round pick in 2015, Kendricks has been central to the success of a Vikings defense that, from 2015-19, ranked second in the NFL in points allowed per game (18.8) and yards allowed per game (317.3) and led the League in third-down percentage (33.9 percent allowed). He earned his first Pro Bowl and First-Team All-Pro selections in 2019 after tying for the NFL lead among linebackers with 12 pass breakups. Currently, Kendricks is fifth in the NFL in total tackles (107) and is tied for the most interceptions by a linebacker with three. In 2015, the former UCLA Bruin became the first Vikings rookie to lead the team in tackles since Minnesota's inaugural 1961 season. He has led the Vikings in tackles in each of his first five seasons. Kendricks is on pace to tie franchise records of six consecutive seasons as the team's leading tackler, matching Pro Bowlers Scott Studwell (1980-85) and Chad Greenway (2008-13).

As a nominee, Kendricks will wear a *Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year* helmet decal through the end of the season in recognition of his accomplishments on and off the field.

For the third year in a row, all 32 team winners will be highlighted as nominees and recognized for their important work during the weekend leading up to Super Bowl LV. The 2020 Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year will be announced during NFL Honors, a primetime awards special to air the week of Super Bowl LV, on CBS.

All 32 nominees will receive a \$40,000 donation in their name to their charity of choice. The winner of the Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year award will receive a \$250,000 donation to the charity of their choice. All donations are courtesy of the NFL Foundation and Nationwide.

Fans are encouraged to participate in Nationwide's 6th annual Charity Challenge, a social media campaign designed to support and promote team nominees. Fans can vote on Twitter by using #WPMOYChallenge followed by their favorite nominee's last name. The player whose unique hashtag is used the most between Dec. 10 and Jan 17 will receive a \$25,000 contribution to their charity of choice, while the second and third place finishers will receive \$10,000 and \$5,000 donations, all courtesy of Nationwide. Hashtag information and official rules can be found at nfl.com/manoftheyear. New this year, fans can win NFL Shop gift cards and additional money for their favorite nominee's charity. Each Monday during the #WPMOYChallenge, Nationwide will ask fans to respond on Twitter with their favorite nominee and one randomly selected fan each week will win a \$100 NFL Shop gift card and \$2,500 for their favorite nominee's charity.

More information about the Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year Award can be found at <http://www.nfl.com/manoftheyear>.

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