



# Jonathan & Judy Hoff *Scholar-Athlete* of the Week



## Frederick Williams

Recognized for balancing the transition to the higher academic and athletic demands of college via rigor, routine, and range. Frederick has consistently stood out as a hard worker who is focused on his academic responsibilities just as much as he is on his athletic obligations. It is clear through the effort he has put into keeping track of due dates and assignments that he has great pride in his education and learning, and cares about pursuing success in his classes. Frederick's commitment to coursework clearly reflects the respect he has for himself and his potential. He takes advantage of the resources available to him through meeting with academic support staff as a path to engaging more intentionally with curricula assignments and the learning process. Academic staff members have greatly enjoyed getting to know Frederick and learning more about his goals of pursuing success with a clear sense of passion and purpose, stepping beyond his comfort zone, rising to the occasion, and maintaining focus in the process. His persistent approach to seeking knowledge, advancing skills, and building alliances will serve him well, at Cal and beyond campus borders, as he continues to excel on and off the field.



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## Belay Brummel

Recognized for actively connecting to service opportunities and organizations aligned with interests, while applying skills to develop and lead social impact projects and make sustained service commitments. Belay has holistically embraced the Cal journey by finding an impactful balance between the curricular and co-curricular. He is truly dedicated to the process of academic growth and athletic development, setting the bar high for himself in the classroom, on the field, and throughout the campus community. Beyond maintaining high marks in courses, Belay is currently serving in a leadership role as a co-director of social impact for the Student Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) – advocating for student-athlete needs and priorities; voicing peer concerns; connecting with other university committees; organizing community engagement events; managing social media and branding efforts; and reaching out to companies for resources and sponsorships. He has also given back to local youth by volunteering with the Golden Buddies and Reading Challenge programs, encouraging youth to stay engaged through both body and mind, and helping them pursue their potential with a sense of purpose.



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## Nate Escalada

Recognized for cultivating a sense of belonging within the academic and athletic community by seeking out relationships via deliberate engagement with an extended network of peers, staff, faculty, coaches, and organizations. Nate has taken full advantage of transformative opportunities, building a solid foundation that aligns his passion and purpose with current and future pursuits. As a member of the Cal Football Program he has been awarded "Defensive Scout Team Player of the Week" and "Special Teams Scout Team Player of the Week" providing game-like scenario simulation. Nate has also participated and led groups in community outreach programs such as Golden Buddies and the Summer Reading Challenge to foster support for children with disabilities and local elementary schools. Furthermore, he has enhanced his interest in commercial real estate as an intern with ACRE and Newmark gaining investment knowledge in underwritings, property valuations, and client-seller transactions. Nate has mindfully expanded on his goals beyond the classroom space with the Undergraduate Real Estate Club (UREC), a rigorous semester-long analyst training program that has provided him with the technical and professional skills needed to succeed in the industry, allowing him to further connect with professionals and projects.



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## Justin Williams-Thomas

Recognized for prioritizing self-awareness by building core academic skills and maintaining an open mindset via a commitment to interdisciplinary discovery, from both a curricular and co-curricular lens. Justin leveraged his interest in STEM-related disciplines at a young age to spark a balance between academic growth, athletic pursuits, and professional endeavors, mindfully embracing the duality of his being and becoming. In the rigorous process of the journey, he has overcome adversity and hardships by channeling his passion, leaning on a support system, maintaining accountability, and practicing discipline via habits and goals. Justin is in the process of completing an undergraduate degree in Social Welfare with high marks and considering post-graduate studies in Public Health, as he aspires to open his own physical therapy clinic in the future to help athletes who are suffering from injuries. Beyond the classroom and the field, he is currently serving as a mentor and coach for local youth with Next Level Sports – guiding them to find balance between education and competition in a challenging yet caring environment. Justin's perpetual perseverance continues to be the secret to his success!



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## R.J. Stephens

Recognized for channeling his acquired knowledge and vast skills to pursue meaningful and diverse co-curricular opportunities, that align with his professional interests, while developing key leadership skills on campus and beyond Cal borders. R.J. embraces the transformative growth process as a balance between consciousness of self, in relation to others, and within a specific context. He has leveraged this formula to enhance his expertise in finance and wealth management, while maintaining a keen eye on the many lived experience factors that impact his identity, beyond the classroom and the field. R.J.'s highlight reel of accolades includes – (1) interning with Newmark Real Estate Company via a software bootcamp and collaboration with realtors; (2) guiding younger athletes in their transitional journeys with the Talk to Talent Mentorship Program; (3) coaching and officiating K/1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade flag football teams for Next Level Sports; and (4) serving as an intern with the King Castling Group, researching debt and equity primarily for high growth enterprises. Outside of his professional endeavors, he has played a key role in advancing the growth of Cal's Black Student-Athlete Community (BSAC) group, helping them earn a distinguished national honor in 2024.