

Inside Luke Kaumatule's commitment

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A week ago Sunday, [Luke Kaumatule](#) called [Stanford](#) head coach [David Shaw](#) and revealed his intentions to commit to the Cardinal.

"[I committed] just because I want to get a good education and football is only a vehicle for getting that education," Kaumatule said.

Making his college decision helped put a positive cap on a difficult week for young Kaumatule. On Friday, Aug. 26, in his team's third game of the year, Kaumatule suffered a torn ACL. After the pain subsided, Kaumatule's mind wandered to the state of his Stanford scholarship offer.

"At first I was kind of scared I might lose my offer because I got injured," Kaumatule said.

A conversation with Coach Shaw put those fears to rest. Stanford's coaching staff vowed to support Kaumatule throughout his rehab.

"Coach Shaw told me that the offer still stands, and they're willing to help me in all the situations I'm in," Kaumatule said.

Once he learned his scholarship to Stanford was still valid, it didn't take long for Kaumatule and his family to decide making a commitment to the Cardinal was the right call, according to Luke's father, Soakai.

"After he got off the phone with Coach Shaw and Coach Shaw told him that the scholarship is still there and he still considers Luke his family, after that conversation I got a hold of the mom and we sat down with Luke and said a prayer," Soakai Kaumatule said. "And after that, [last] Sunday morning, we decided Luke, I think this is the time, the coaches are still there for you and still supporting you, I think we owe Stanford by committing. He was like, 'Yeah, Dad, I want to commit.'

"Then it was one of those moments like you said, one of those proud moments. I told him with this injury, you know playing football you always get injured and you always want the most of the academic, and Stanford has that. When you get injured and it's threatening to your career, if you're at Stanford, you get that Stanford degree and it's going to help you throughout your whole life."

Luke Kaumatule said that despite his injury, Coach Shaw received the news of his commitment with great enthusiasm.

"He was really excited," Kaumatule said. "He told me I just have to keep working hard. Even though I'm committed, my story isn't over. I have to keep working hard in my senior year, keep my grades up, work hard on my SAT scores. It's not a guarantee that I'm going to get into Stanford, I still have to meet the requirements and all, but I have the full ride."

Now more than a week removed from the injury, and with his recruitment over, Kaumatule said he is in better spirits than he was in the days following the injury.

"At first I was kind of down because I was scared, I had no idea what happens after you tear your ACL," Kaumatule said. "I didn't know what happens to a football player after. After some players came and talked to me and told me after you tear your ACL you just go through surgery, rehab, and usually you come back faster than you were before. Now I'm not even down anymore, staying positive, just ready to train, ready to train hard and to rehab and to get ready to start training on the field again."

Kaumatule is scheduled to have surgery on his knee within the next few weeks, after the swelling has sufficiently subsided. The procedure will be performed by Punahou's offensive coordinator, orthopedic surgeon Dr. Darryl Kan.

Kan, who played college football at Dartmouth and had tryouts with the NFL's 49ers and Chargers before going to medical school at [USC](#), is considered one of the top orthopedic surgeons in Hawaii.

"I'm being operated by our coach, he actually played for the 49ers and had his degree," Kaumatule said.

"I heard he's the best in the state for these situations, and he is going to do my surgery."

From afar, Stanford's medical staff will maintain contact with Dr. Kan through the surgical and rehab process.

"Stanford's also talking to him," Kaumatule said. "I heard that their trainers and doctors over there at Stanford are going to stay in touch with coach, who's doing my surgery."

That support hasn't gone unnoticed by Kaumatule's family, said Soakai Kaumatule. "We're just totally appreciative of the support from Coach Shaw, from Coach Anderson, corresponding on phone and texting and all that stuff and also Coach Hart as well," Soakai said. "Luke is super-happy that he still has the support with this injury in this dark time."



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