

Boise State Coach Targeted for Openly Expressing Christian Faith

Boise State football head coach Spencer Danielson is under fire from the Freedom From Religion Foundation, which has accused him of “unconstitutional religious coercion” for openly expressing his Christian faith while leading the team.

Freedom From Religion Foundation has filed a complaint with the university’s general counsel, claiming Danielson’s comments violate the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment by allegedly tying participation in the football program to religious belief. However, Danielson himself is also protected by the First Amendment, which guarantees his right to free speech and religious expression.

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“Danielson’s insensitive comments send a clear message that participation in the football program is tied to religious belief—an exclusionary and unconstitutional stance that alienates non-Christian and nonreligious athletes,” the release said.

Similar cases have historically favored the accused, including a landmark Supreme Court ruling in favor of a Washington high school coach who was fired for praying with players. The court not only reinstated him but also awarded a \$ million settlement.

Danielson, who has risen through the coaching ranks before joining Boise State in 2017, has built a successful program centered on leadership, teamwork and faith. Under his guidance, the Broncos secured a 12-2 record, a Mountain West

championship and a College Football Playoff berth in 2024.

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During a recent press conference, Danielson emphasized his commitment to his values: "We want to be a light on a hill that's going to do football different at Boise State... It's going to be based on love. It's going to be based on giving Jesus the glory. If people don't like that, don't come here."

As the controversy unfolds, the case could become another test of whether public figures in leadership roles can freely express their religious beliefs without facing institutional backlash.

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