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**LINDENHURST HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE NEW YORK BOYS FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (December 11, 2017) — In its 33<sup>rd</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Jeremy Ruckert of Lindenhurst High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade New York Football Player of the Year. Ruckert is the first Gatorade New York Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Lindenhurst High School.

The award, which recognizes not only outstanding athletic excellence, but also high standards of academic achievement and exemplary character demonstrated on and off the field, distinguishes Ruckert as New York's best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award to be announced in December, Ruckert joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Mitchell Trubisky (2012-13, Mentor High School, Ohio), Greg Olsen (2002-03, Wayne Hills High School, N.J.), Matthew Stafford (2005-06 Highland Park High School, Texas), Harrison Smith (2006-07 Knoxville Catholic High School, Tenn.), Latavius Murray (2007-08, Onondaga High School, N.Y.), Brock Osweiler (2008-09, Flathead High School, Mont.) and Leonard Fournette (2014-15 & 2012-13, St. Augustine High School, La.).

The 6-foot-6, 240-pound senior tight end, linebacker and kicker caught 61 passes for 1,094 yards and 13 touchdowns this past season, leading the Bulldogs to a 12-0 record and the Div. I Long Island Championship. Ruckert also recorded 61 tackles on defense, with 13 sacks and four forced fumbles, while converting six field goals. He is a three-time All-State honoree and has been selected to play in the 2018 U.S. Army All-American Bowl.

Ruckert has volunteered locally on behalf of youth football programs and has raised funds to benefit research supporting the battle against childhood cancer. "Jeremy Ruckert is one of the best players I've ever coached against," said Paul Longo, head coach at William Floyd High. "He's one of the best kickers I've ever seen, one of the best linebackers I've ever seen, one of the best tight end prospects. He can do everything, and I think some day he'll be playing on Sundays."

Ruckert has maintained a 92.5 GPA in the classroom. He has verbally committed to play football on scholarship at Ohio State University in the fall of 2018.

The [Gatorade Player of the Year](#) program annually recognizes one winner in the District of Columbia and each of the 50 states that sanction high school football, girls volleyball, boys and girls cross country, boys and girls basketball, boys and girls soccer, baseball, softball, and boys and girls track & field, and awards one National Player of the Year in each sport. The selection process is administered by the Gatorade Player of the Year Selection Committee, which work with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

Ruckert joins recent Gatorade New York Football Players of the Year Jack Coan (2016-17, Sayville High School), Jake Zembiec (2015-16, Aquinas Institute), Jordan Fredericks (2014-15, Lawrence High School), Curtis Samuel (2013-14, Erasmus Hall), Tyler Rouse (2012-13, C.W. Baker High School), Akeel Lynch (2011-12, St. Francis High School), Ishaq Williams (2010-11, Abraham Lincoln High School), and Dan Scalo (2009-10, Monroe-Woodbury High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Ruckert will be able to select a national or local youth sports organization to receive a grant as part of the Gatorade Play It Forward program. Every Gatorade Player of the Year state winner receives a \$1,000 grant to donate and will have the opportunity to enter for an additional \$10,000 spotlight grant by writing a brief essay explaining why their selected organization deserves additional support. 12 spotlight grants - one for each sport - will be announced throughout the year.

To keep up to date on the latest happenings, become a fan of Gatorade Player of the Year on Facebook and follow the conversation on Twitter #GatoradePOY. For more on the Gatorade Player of the Year program, including nomination information, a complete list of past winners and the announcement of the Gatorade National Player of the Year, visit <http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com/>.

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