

SUN VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE NORTH CAROLINA BOYS FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (December 6, 2018) — In its 34th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced **Sam Howell of Sun Valley High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade North Carolina Football Player of the Year**. Howell is the first Gatorade North Carolina Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Sun Valley 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 Howell as North Carolina'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, Howell joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Emmitt Smith (1986-87, Escambia High School, Fla.), Matthew Stafford (2005-06 Highland Park High School, Texas) and Christian McCaffrey (2012-13, 2013-14, Valor Christian High School, Colo.).

The 6-foot-2, 220-pound senior quarterback passed for 3,240 yards and 36 touchdowns this past season, leading the Spartans (10-3) to the second round of the Class 3AA tournament. Howell completed 179 of 299 passes with eight interceptions, while also rushing for 1,392 yards and 17 touchdowns on 175 carries. A three-time All-State honoree, he has twice been selected Southern Carolina Conference Player of the Year and was chosen to play in the 2019 U.S. Army All-American Bowl.

Howell has volunteered locally on behalf of a homeless shelter, youth sports programs and an elementary school reading initiative. "Sam Howell is the real deal," said Michael Hertz, head coach at Porter Ridge High. "He's as good as any high school quarterback I've seen, and I've been coaching for 20-plus years. He's incredibly accurate and he can make all the throws, and the thing that makes him so difficult to defend is that he is a truck running the ball."

Howell has maintained a 4.09 GPA in the classroom. He has verbally committed to play football on scholarship at Florida State University next fall.

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. From the 12 national winners, one male and one female athlete are each named Gatorade High School Athlete of the Year. In all, 607 athletes are honored each year.

Howell joins recent Gatorade North Carolina Football Players of the Year Quavaris Crouch (2017-18, Harding University High School), Zamir White (2016-17, Scotland High School), Chazz Surratt (2015-16, East Lincoln High School), Josh Ladowski (2014-15, Lake Norman High School), and Will Grier (2013-14, Davidson Day School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Howell has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of his choosing. He is also eligible to submit an essay to win one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants for the organization of choice, which will be announced throughout the year.

Since the program's inception in 1985, Gatorade Player of the Year award recipients have won hundreds of professional and college championships, and many have also turned into pillars in their communities, becoming coaches, business owners and educators.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit www.Gatorade.com/POY, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/Gatorade.