

**T.L. HANNA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE SOUTH 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 **Zacch Pickens of T.L. Hanna High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade South Carolina Football Player of the Year**. Pickens is the second Gatorade South Carolina Football Player of the Year to be chosen from T.L. Hanna 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 Pickens as South 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, Pickens 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-5, 285-pound senior defensive end and running back had led the Yellow Jackets to a 14-0 record and a berth in the Class AAAAA state final against Dutch Fork High at the time of his selection. Pickens had recorded 82 tackles, including 14 for loss, and five sacks through 14 games. A four-time All-Region honoree, who has thrice received All-State recognition rushed for 834 yards and 21 touchdowns, averaging 8.9 yards per carry, entering the state title game.

Pickens has volunteered locally with Hemophilia of South Carolina, and he has donated his time as a youth mentor. "Zacch is the most complete player in this state by far," said Scott Earley, head coach of Westside High. "He has played both sides of the ball and special teams all year. He is a selfless, true team player."

Pickens has maintained a weighted 3.71 GPA in the classroom. He has verbally committed to play football on an athletic scholarship at the University of South Carolina in the fall of 2019.

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.

Pickens joins recent Gatorade South Carolina Football Players of the Year Derion Kendrick (2017-18, South Pointe High School), Dakereon Joyner (2016-17, Fort Dorchester High School), Austin Scott (2015-16, Spartanburg High School), J.J. Arcega-Whiteside (2014-15, Dorman High School), and Shuler Bentley (2013-14, James. F. Byrnes High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Pickens 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.