

LOUISA COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE VIRGINIA 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 **Brandon Smith of Louisa County High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade Virginia Football Player of the Year**. Smith is the first Gatorade Virginia Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Louisa County 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 Smith as Virginia'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, Smith 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, 230-pound senior linebacker recorded 135 tackles, 14 quarterback pressures and five sacks this past season, leading the Lions (11-1) to the Class 4A playoffs. Smith also forced nine fumbles and broke up three passes. A First Team All-State selection, he was ranked as the nation's No. 14 recruit in the Class of 2019 by 247Sports.com and has been selected to play in the 2019 Under Armour All-America Game.

Smith has served as an elementary school mentor and has volunteered locally on behalf of youth sports programs. "Brandon Smith is as good a high school player as I've coached against in 21 years in this state," said Jeff Lloyd, head coach at Monticello High. "His closing speed as a linebacker is incredible. If you don't account for him on every play he will sure mess up your Friday night. He's a special, once-in-a-lifetime kid."

Smith has maintained a 3.30 GPA in the classroom. He has verbally committed to play football on scholarship at Penn 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.

Smith joins recent Gatorade Virginia Football Players of the Year Ricky Slade (2017-18, C.D. Hylton High School), Lamont Atkins (2016-17, Lake Braddock High School), Wayne Davis (2015-16, Lake Taylor High School), Noah Reimers (2014-15, Tuscarora High School), and Andrew Brown (2013-14, Oscar Smith High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

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