

SPRING VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE WEST 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 **Graeson Malashevich of Spring Valley High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade West Virginia Football Player of the Year**. Malashevich is the first Gatorade West Virginia Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Spring 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 Malashevich as West 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, Malashevich 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 5-foot-10, 170-pound senior running back and defensive back scored double-digit touchdowns both rushing and receiving this past season, leading the Wolves (13-1) to the Group AAA state championship game. Malashevich caught 37 passes for 915 yards and 14 scores while rushing for 895 yards and 11 TDs. He also passed for five touchdowns, scored two on punt returns, two on interception returns and one on a kickoff return. The Mountain State Athletic Conference Player of the Year, he contributed 46 tackles and four interceptions on defense.

The senior class president at Spring Valley High, Malashevich has volunteered locally as a youth football camp counselor, and has donated his time to multiple community service initiatives through his church. "Graeson is featured in all three phases of the game," said Alex Daugherty, head coach of Riverside High. "He has such a big impact on his team because of the extended role he has. He has proven to be a reliable option on special teams, offense and defense."

Malashevich has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. He remains undecided upon a collegiate destination.

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.

Malashevich joins recent Gatorade West Virginia Football Players of the Year Tyson Bagent (2017-18, Martinsburg High School), Isaac Brown (2016-17, Martinsburg High School), Cody Mitchell (2015-16, Point Pleasant High School), Kentre Grier (2014-15, South Charleston High School), and Chazzy Thomas (2013-14, Morgantown High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

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