

**BISHOP GORMAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NEVADA FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (December 6, 2019) — In its 35th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced **Rome Odunze of Bishop Gorman High School** as its **2019-20 Gatorade Nevada Football Player of the Year**. Odunze is the ninth Gatorade Nevada Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Bishop Gorman 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 Odunze as Nevada'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, Odunze joins an elite group of past state football award-winners, 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-3, 195-pound senior wide receiver caught 54 passes for 1,222 yards and 15 touchdowns this past season, leading the Gaels (11-2) to the Class 4A Desert Region championship game. Odunze compiled at least 100 receiving yards in 12 of the 13 games he played, and scored a touchdown in all but one. A 2018 First Team All-State selection, he concluded his prep football career with 121 receptions for 2,699 yards and 31 scores.

Odunze has volunteered locally with Catholic Charities of Southern Nevada in addition to donating his time to the Special Olympics and as a youth sports camp counselor. "In my 24 years of coaching I have not seen a player that creates such a huge mismatch against his opponents," said Andy Ostolaza, head coach of Silverado High. "Rome is one of the best wide receivers I have seen in my career."

Odunze has maintained a weighted 3.47 GPA in the classroom. He has made a verbal commitment to attend the University of Washington 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 and 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.

Odunze joins recent Gatorade Nevada Football Players of the Year Cade McNamara (2018-19 and 2017-18, Damonte Ranch High School), Tate Martell (2016-17 and 2014-15, Bishop Gorman High School), and Biaggio Ali Walsh (2015-16, Bishop Gorman High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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