

## **JACKSON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE ALABAMA FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (December 5, 2025) — In its 41<sup>st</sup> year celebrating the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Ezavier 'EJ' Crowell of Jackson High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Alabama Football Player of the Year.

Gatorade Player of the Year is the top honor in high school sports, celebrating the nation's best high school athletes for their excellence in sport, academics and community. The award recognizes Crowell as Alabama's best high school football player, and he joins an elite legacy that spans professional athletes and coaches to CEOs, such as Peyton Manning (1993-94, Isidore Newman School, LA), Nick Singleton (2021-22, Governor Mifflin High School, PA) and Keelon Russell (2024-25, Duncanville High School, TX).

At the time of his selection, the 5-foot-11, 215-pound senior running back had led the Aggies to a 12-2 record and a berth in the Class 4A state championship game. Crowell had rushed for 2,324 yards and 30 touchdowns through 14 games as Jackson High School sought its second straight state title. A 2024 First Team All-State selection, he concluded his three-year prep football career with 6,025 rushing yards and 86 touchdowns.

Crowell has volunteered locally as a youth football coach. "EJ has played all season long with a fierce intensity and a desire for contact," said Cody Flournoy, head coach of Jackson High School. "This aggressive style has led to punishing runs against the defense. He also has elite speed. Add to that his unnatural balance and pure strength and you end up with a five-star running back who stands out versus all competition."

Crowell has maintained a weighted 3.29 GPA in the classroom. Taking advantage of NCAA early signing rules, Crowell inked a financial-aid agreement that paved the way for him to enroll at the University of Alabama, where he will play football. He will graduate from high school in December and attend classes in the spring semester.

The [Gatorade Player of the Year](#) program annually recognizes one state winner from each of the 50 states and Washington D.C., in 12 different sports: football, girls volleyball, boys and girls cross country, boys and girls basketball, baseball, softball, boys and girls soccer, and boys and girls track & field. In total, 610 high school athletes are honored each year. From the pool of state winners, one national winner is selected in each of the 12 sports. The selection process is administered by the Gatorade Player of the Year Selection Committee, which leverages experts including coaches, scouts, media and others as sources to help evaluate and determine the winners in each sport.

As part of Gatorade's commitment to breaking down barriers in sport, every Player of the Year also receives a grant to donate to a social impact partner. To date, the Gatorade Player of the Year program has provided more than \$6.4 million in grants to winners across more than 2,200 organizations.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit [playeroftheyear.gatorade.com](https://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com) or follow us on social media on Instagram at [instagram.com/Gatorade](https://www.instagram.com/Gatorade), Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) and X(Twitter) at [x.com/Gatorade](https://x.com/Gatorade).

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