

## **FOLSOM HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE CALIFORNIA 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 Ryder Lyons of Folsom High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade California 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 Lyons as California'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 6-foot-3, 225-pound senior quarterback had led the Bulldogs to a 12-1 record and a berth in the CIF Division 1-AA North Regional championship game. The state's returning Gatorade Player of the Year, Lyons passed for 3,073 yards and 33 touchdowns while also rushing for 239 yards and 12 scores through 12 games, leading Folsom High School to a second straight Sac-Joaquin Section Division I Tournament title. Ranked as the nation's No. 21 recruit in the Class of 2026 by 247Sports.com, he is a two-time Sacramento Bee Player of the Year.

Lyons has volunteered locally as a youth football coach and has also donated his time to multiple community service initiatives through his church youth group. "Ryder's on-field accomplishments and recognition are widespread, well-documented and need no further acknowledgement," said Paul Doherty, head coach of Folsom High School. "I'm personally most grateful for Ryder's genuine humanity and adoration of teammates and coaches, accountability on all fronts football and incredibly grounded nature, all-around."

Lyons has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. At the time of his selection, he had made a verbal commitment to receive athletic aid to play football at Brigham Young University after completing his mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

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://instagram.com/Gatorade), Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://facebook.com/GatoradePOY) and X(Twitter) at [x.com/Gatorade](https://x.com/Gatorade).

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