

OWENSBORO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE KENTUCKY FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (December 5, 2025) — In its 41st year celebrating the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Evan Hampton of Owensboro High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Kentucky 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 Hampton as Kentucky'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, 208-pound senior running back had rushed for 1,835 yards and 28 touchdowns, leading the Red Devils (12-2) to a berth in the 5A state championship game. Hampton averaged 11.5 yards per carry through 14 games and added 280 receiving yards along with three more touchdowns through the air. He rushed for 326 yards in Owensboro High School's state quarterfinal win over Fairdale High School, breaking the program record of 325 yards by eventual NFL running back Mark Higgs, set in 1982. He ranks as the No. 3 recruit in the Class of 2026 in Kentucky as rated by 247Sports.

A member of his school's Fellowship of Christian Athletes leadership board, Hampton has volunteered locally at the Daniel Pitino homeless shelter. He has also served as the treasurer of his school's student leadership committee for two years. "He may be the hardest-working player I've been around and it shows in his play," said Quadarius Wallace, head coach of Daviess County High School. "There's nothing teams can do to stop him. He can catch, he can block, he has elite-level speed and he's 208 pounds. He has developed the ability to run 'behind his pads,' which makes him very dangerous. I love his humbleness as well. He is the first person to shake an opposing coach's hand. He picks up his teammates and opponents as well. He's a top-notch human."

Hampton has maintained a 3.96 GPA in the classroom. At the time of his selection, he had made a verbal commitment to receive athletic aid to play football at Vanderbilt University next fall.

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 or follow us on social media on Instagram at instagram.com/Gatorade, Facebook at facebook.com/GatoradePOY and X (Twitter) at x.com/Gatorade.

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