

THORNTON ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE MAINE FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (December 5, 2025) — In its 41st year celebrating the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Connor Ayoob of Thornton Academy is the 2025-26 Gatorade Maine 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 Ayoob as Maine'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).

The 5-foot-8, 190-pound senior running back rushed for a program-record 2,102 yards and 31 touchdowns this past season, leading the Golden Trojans (11-1) to a Class A state championship. The 2025 Class A South Player of the Year, Ayoob also caught 12 passes for 259 yards and a touchdown. He ran for 240 yards and four touchdowns in Thornton Academy's 28-0 state final win over Portland.

A varsity basketball player, Ayoob has volunteered locally with multiple charities that raise money for cancer research, and he also coaches a Special Olympics Unified Basketball squad. "Ayoob fits the bill (for Gatorade Player of the Year)," said Mike Vance, head coach at Scarborough High School. "He was extremely productive for Thornton Academy this fall. He combined speed, strength, agility and (ran behind) a talented offensive line to perform at a high level each week."

Ayoob has maintained a 3.23 weighted GPA in the classroom. He remains undecided upon a collegiate destination.

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

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