

BEDFORD HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE NEW HAMPSHIRE FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (December 5, 2025) — In its 41st year celebrating the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Bennett Matthews of Bedford High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade New Hampshire 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 Matthews as New Hampshire'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 6-foot-2, 195-pound senior quarterback and safety led the Bulldogs (12-0) to a Division I state title this past season while amassing 38 touchdowns. He completed 70.2 percent of his passes for 1,334 yards and 17 touchdowns against just one interception, and added 1,226 rushing yards and 21 touchdowns on the ground. Defensively, he picked off a pair of passes. Matthews ran for 173 yards and accounted for all five of Bedford's touchdowns in its 35-7 win over Pinkerton in the state final. New Hampshire's 2024 Division I Lacrosse Offensive Player of the Year, he ranks as the nation's No. 3 lacrosse prospect in the Class of 2026 as rated by Inside Lacrosse.

A two-time team captain, Matthews has volunteered locally with Unified Wellness, which assists students dealing with physical and intellectual challenges, and he's also donated his time as a youth lacrosse coach. "While some of his plays are designed from the get-go, his real damage comes when he's in the pocket and he decides that he's going to run," said Brian O'Reilly, head coach of Pinkerton Academy. "He makes opposing players look like they're afraid to tackle him. No one can get a hold of him. He has lacrosse moves in the open field, and he can throw very well."

Matthews has maintained a 3.86 GPA in the classroom. At the time of his selection, he had made a verbal commitment to receive athletic aid to play lacrosse at Duke University next spring.

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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