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**PINE-RICHLAND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE PENNSYLVANIA BOYS FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (December 11, 2017) — In its 33<sup>rd</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Phil Jurkovec of Pine-Richland High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Pennsylvania Football Player of the Year. Jurkovec is the second Gatorade Pennsylvania Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Pine-Richland High School.

The award, which recognizes not only outstanding athletic excellence, but also high standards of academic achievement and exemplary character demonstrated on and off the field, distinguishes Jurkovec as Pennsylvania's best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award to be announced in December, Jurkovec joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Mitchell Trubisky (2012-13, Mentor High School, Ohio), Greg Olsen (2002-03, Wayne Hills High School, N.J.), Matthew Stafford (2005-06 Highland Park High School, Texas), Harrison Smith (2006-07 Knoxville Catholic High School, Tenn.), Latavius Murray (2007-08, Onondaga High School, N.Y.), Brock Osweiler (2008-09, Flathead High School, Mont.) and Leonard Fournette (2014-15 & 2012-13, St. Augustine High School, La.).

The 6-foot-5, 215-pound senior quarterback has accounted for 4,905 yards of offense and 58 touchdowns, leading the Rams to a 15-0 season and a berth in the Class 6A state final on Dec. 9. Jurkovec threw for 3,769 yards, 38 touchdowns and just five interceptions through 15 games, completing 74.2 percent of his passes (230-for-310). He has also rushed for 1,136 yards and 20 touchdowns on 115 attempts for an average of 9.9 yards a carry. One of six finalists for U.S. Army Player of the Year in association with the 2018 All-American Bowl, Jurkovec had thrown for 8,002 yards, run for 2,867 yards and accounted for 109 touchdowns entering the final game of his prep career.

Jurkovec is also a Pine-Richland Peer Buddy, working directly with intellectually and physically challenged peers to learn about disability rights and advocacy. He is also a member of St. Alphonsus Church, where he attends Teen Life/Edge nights in addition to volunteering at the Harvest Home parish dinner and a local, church-affiliated retirement home. Additionally, Jurkovec coaches youth basketball and assists in the care of his family's foster child. "I have been coaching for 28 years," said Seneca Valley head coach Ron Butschle. "I have coached four D1 quarterbacks (and) Phil Jurkovec is far and away, not only the best high school quarterback I have ever seen personally, but he is the best high school football player I have ever seen personally. The guys I have coached were all tremendous. Jurkovec's combination of size, speed, arm strength, passing accuracy, poise, and decision making make him beyond comparison."

Jurkovec has maintained a 3.64 GPA in the classroom. He has verbally committed to play football on scholarship at the University of Notre Dame in the fall of 2018.

The [Gatorade Player of the Year](#) program annually recognizes one winner in the District of Columbia and each of the 50 states that sanction high school football, girls volleyball, boys and girls cross country, boys and girls basketball, boys and girls soccer, baseball, softball, and boys and girls track & field, and awards one National Player of the Year in each sport. The selection process is administered by the Gatorade Player of the Year Selection Committee, which work with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

Jurkovec joins recent Gatorade Pennsylvania Football Players of the Year Lamont Wade (2016-17, Clairton High School), Brandon McIlwain (2015-16, Council Rock High School North), Ben DiNucci (2014-15, Pine-Richland High School), Andrew Ford (2013-14, Cedar Cliff High School), Matt Bodamer (2012-13, Port Allegany High School), Noah Spence (2011-12, Bishop McDevitt High School), Brendan Nosovitch (2010-11, Allentown Central Catholic High School), and Kyle Smith (2009-10, Lancaster Catholic High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Jurkovec will be able to select a national or local youth sports organization to receive a grant as part of the Gatorade Play It Forward program. Every Gatorade Player of the Year state winner receives a \$1,000 grant to donate and will have the opportunity to enter for an additional \$10,000 spotlight grant by writing a brief essay explaining why their selected organization deserves additional support. 12 spotlight grants - one for each sport - will be announced throughout the year.

To keep up to date on the latest happenings, become a fan of Gatorade Player of the Year on Facebook and follow the conversation on Twitter #GatoradePOY. For more on the Gatorade Player of the Year program, including nomination information, a complete list of past winners and the announcement of the Gatorade National Player of the Year, visit <http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com/>.

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