

**FAIRVIEW HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE COLORADO BOYS FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (December 6, 2018) — In its 34th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced **Aidan Atkinson of Fairview High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade Colorado Football Player of the Year**. Atkinson is the first Gatorade Colorado Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Fairview 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 Atkinson as Colorado'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, Atkinson joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Emmitt Smith (1986-87, Escambia High School, Fla.), Matthew Stafford (2005-06 Highland Park HS, Texas) and Christian McCaffrey (2012-13, 2013-14, Valor Christian High School, Colo.).

The 6-foot-3, 210-pound junior quarterback passed for a state-record 55 touchdowns this past season, leading the Knights (10-2) to the second round of the Class 5A state tournament. Atkinson completed 247-of-395 passes for 3,952 yards before a thumb injury in the regular-season finale ended his season prematurely. Atkinson tossed at least five scoring passes in eight of the 10 games he started. He concluded his junior year with 7,357 passing yards and 78 touchdowns in his prep football career.

Atkinson has volunteered locally with Fairview High's Knights Crew, which helps acclimate freshmen to high school. He has also donated his time with Youths for Nurturing Minds, raising money for African girls to attend school in Tanzania. "Aidan was unstoppable this year," said Frank Ybarra, head coach of Horizon High. "He makes all the right reads, releases the ball extremely quickly and accurately and avoids mistakes."

Atkinson has maintained a weighted 4.12 GPA in the classroom. He has made a verbal commitment to play football on an athletic scholarship at Northwestern University beginning in the fall of 2020.

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. From the 12 national winners, one male and one female athlete are each named Gatorade High School Athlete of the Year. In all, 607 athletes are honored each year.

Atkinson joins recent Gatorade Colorado Football Players of the Year Ty Evans (2017-18, Palmer Ridge High School), Dylan McCaffrey (2016-17, Valor Christian High School), JoJo Domann (2015-16, Pine Creek High School), Andrew Wingard (2014-15, Ralston Valley High School), and Christian McCaffrey (2013-14, Valor Christian High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Atkinson has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of his choosing. He is also eligible to submit an essay to win one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants for the organization of choice, which will be announced throughout the year.

Since the program's inception in 1985, Gatorade Player of the Year award recipients have won hundreds of professional and college championships, and many have also turned into pillars in their communities, becoming coaches, business owners and educators.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit www.Gatorade.com/POY, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/Gatorade.