

OWATONNA SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE MINNESOTA 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 **Jason Williamson of Owatonna Senior High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade Minnesota Football Player of the Year**. Williamson is the first Gatorade Minnesota Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Owatonna Senior 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 Williamson as Minnesota'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, Williamson 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 High School, Texas) and Christian McCaffrey (2012-13, 2013-14, Valor Christian High School, Colo.).

The state's returning Gatorade State Player of the Year, the 6-foot-2, 205-pound senior running back and free safety led the Huskies to a 13-0 record and a second straight Class AAAAA state championship this past season. Williamson rushed for 3,012 yards and 46 touchdowns, including 1,612 yards and 26 touchdowns in five postseason games. Defensively, Williamson recorded 24 tackles and two interceptions. He concluded his prep football career with 7,012 rushing yards and 102 touchdowns.

Williamson has volunteered locally as an elementary school mentor and he has donated his time as a youth football and basketball coach. "Jason has had another tremendous year," said Bubba Sullivan, head coach of Northfield High. "He is dangerous because any time he touches the ball he can score. He has great vision, great feet and excellent speed."

Williamson has maintained a 3.69 GPA in the classroom. He has verbally committed to play football on an athletic scholarship at the University of Minnesota in the fall of 2019.

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.

Two-time winner Williamson joins Gatorade Minnesota Football Players of the Year Wade Sullivan (2016-17, Lakeville North High School), J.D. Spielman (2015-16, Eden Prairie High School), Ryan Schlichte (2014-15, Mankato West High School), and Jacques Perra (2013-14, Roseville Area High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Williamson 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.