

LATHROP HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE ALASKA FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (December 6, 2019) — In its 35th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced **Jace Henry of Lathrop High School** as its **2019-20 Gatorade Alaska Football Player of the Year**. Henry is the second Gatorade Alaska Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Lathrop 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 Henry as Alaska'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, Henry joins an elite group of past state football award-winners, 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 6-foot-4, 230-pound senior quarterback and linebacker rushed for 1,573 yards and 23 touchdowns this past season, leading the Malemutes (5-4) to the Division II state championship game. Henry also passed for 1,296 yards and 14 touchdowns, while recording 16 tackles and punting for a 36.8-yard average. Henry was named the Alaska Coaches Association State Player of the Year and the Division II Player of the Year.

Henry, who appeared in commercials and sitcoms as a child, has volunteered locally as part of community beautification projects and with the Special Olympics. "Jace is a once-in-a-lifetime player," said Luke Balash, head coach of Lathrop High. "He had to earn his way up through our system. He carried the defense for us as a junior, and this year he carried the offense."

Henry has maintained a 3.95 GPA in the classroom. He remains undecided upon a collegiate destination.

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 and 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.

Henry joins recent Gatorade Alaska Football Players of the Year Colton Herman (2018-19, East Anchorage High School), Derryk Snell (2017-18, Chugiak High School), Brenner Furlong (2016-17, Soldotna High School), Ethan Falaniko (2015-16, Bartlett High School) and Anthony Griffith (2014-15, Ben Eielson High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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

###