

**SALPOINTE CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE ARIZONA 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 **Bijan Robinson of Salpointe Catholic High School** as its **2019-20 Gatorade Arizona Football Player of the Year**. Robinson is the first Gatorade Arizona Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Salpointe Catholic 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 Robinson as Arizona'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, Robinson 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, 205-pound senior running back rushed for 2,235 yards and 38 touchdowns, averaging 17.7 yards per carry, this past season, leading the Lancers (10-1) to the Open Division state semifinals. Robinson also averaged 26.2 yards per reception with three receiving TDs, and he returned a kickoff for a touchdown. Robinson will graduate as the state's career leader with 114 total touchdowns, and he ranks second in career rushing yards with 7,036.

A leader in his church youth group, Robinson has volunteered locally at a homeless shelter, and he has donated his time as a role-model speaker to youth football programs. "Having played against Bijan for the past four years, it's hard to explain how good he really is," said Dustin Peace, head coach of Canyon del Oro High. "This year I was hoping 'he can't get that much better than last year,' but I was totally wrong. If there's a better running back in the country, I'd like to see him."

Robinson has maintained a B average in the classroom. He has verbally committed to play football on scholarship at the University of Texas next fall.

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.

Robinson joins recent Gatorade Arizona Football Players of the Year Jake Smith (2018-19, Notre Dame Preparatory), Brock Purdy (2017-18, Perry High School), Draycen Hall (2016-17, Higley High School), Daniel Bridge-Gadd (2015-16, Paradise Valley High School) and Christian Kirk (2014-15, Saguaro High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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