

NEW PALESTINE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE INDIANA 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 **Charlie Spegal of New Palestine High School** as its **2019-20 Gatorade Indiana Football Player of the Year**. Spegal is the first Gatorade Indiana Football Player of the Year to be chosen from New Palestine 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 Spegal as Indiana'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, Spegal 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 5-foot-11, 225-pound senior running back led the Dragons to a 14-0 record and the Class 5A state championship this past season. Spegal rushed for 3,168 yards and 55 touchdowns, including 160 yards and a score in a 27-20 win over Valparaiso High in the state final. A 2018 MaxPreps All-American and a three-time First Team All-State selection, Spegal concluded his prep football career with 10,867 rushing yards, 173 rushing touchdowns and 175 total touchdowns, each representing a state record.

Spegal has volunteered locally with special needs children and as a youth camp counselor. "Charlie is the most dominant player in Indiana," said Mike Kirschner, head coach of Mount Vernon High School. "He can single-handedly take over a game by breaking tackles and (continually moving the chains to run clock)."

Spegal has maintained a weighted 3.50 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.

Spegal joins recent Gatorade Indiana Football Players of the Year David Bell (2018-19, Warren Central High School), Tyrone Tracy (2017-18, Decatur Central High School), Russ Yeast (2016-17, Center Grove High School), Brandon Peters (2015-16, Avon High School) and Markell Jones (2014-15, Columbus East High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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