

## **WEST SIOUX HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE IOWA FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**CHICAGO** (December 6, 2019) — In its 35<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced **Hunter Dekkers of West Sioux High School** as its **2019-20 Gatorade Iowa Football Player of the Year**. Dekkers is the first Gatorade Iowa Football Player of the Year to be chosen from West Sioux 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 Dekkers as Iowa'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, Dekkers 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-3, 215-pound senior quarterback passed for 3,640 yards and 36 touchdowns this past season, leading the Falcons to the Class 1A semifinals. Dekkers completed 201 of 324 passes with just four interceptions, while also rushing for 439 yards and nine touchdowns on 103 carries. A three-time First Team All-State honoree, he was also an Elite 11 quarterback competition national finalist.

An altar server at his church, Dekkers has served as a peer tutor in his school and has volunteered locally on behalf of youth sports programs. "Hunter Dekkers is the best quarterback I've ever coached against," said Nate Mechaelsen, head coach at Underwood High School. "His accuracy and touch are outstanding, and he has the ability to make all the throws. He can use his athleticism and mobility to make plays when things break down."

Dekkers has maintained a 3.68 GPA in the classroom. He has verbally committed to play football on scholarship at Iowa State University 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.

Dekkers joins recent Gatorade Iowa Football Players of the Year Max Duggan (2018-19, Lewis Central High School), Evan Flitz (2017-18, Iowa City West High School), Oliver Martin (2016-17, Iowa City West High School), Noah Clayberg (2015-16, Pella High School) and Ryan Boyle (2014-15, Dowling Catholic High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Dekkers 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](http://www.Gatorade.com/POY), on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY](http://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) or follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/Gatorade](http://www.twitter.com/Gatorade).