

MINNEHAHA ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE MINNESOTA 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 **Jalen Suggs of Minnehaha Academy** as its **2019-20 Gatorade Minnesota Football Player of the Year**. Suggs is the second Gatorade Minnesota Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Minnehaha Academy.

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 Suggs 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, Suggs 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, 190-pound senior quarterback and defensive back passed for 2,210 yards and 25 touchdowns this past season, leading the SMB Wolfpack (12-1) to the Class AAAA state championship game. The Wolfpack program is a coop arrangement populated by players from St. Paul Academy, Minnehaha Academy and the Blake School. Suggs also rushed for 974 yards and 12 scores this fall. On defense, he racked up 32 tackles and nine interceptions, returning two of them for touchdowns. The two-time Suburban Maroon District Player of the Year, he led SMB to the state title in 2018.

A consensus Top-10 national basketball recruit for Minnehaha Academy, Suggs has volunteered locally with a youth empowerment group called Teens Networking Together, and has donated his time as a youth football and basketball coach. "Jalen is the best high-school athlete I've ever seen," said Adam Frey, head coach of St. Croix Lutheran High. "His natural athleticism is what stands out the most but that is not to be outdone by his confidence and his will to win."

Suggs has maintained a 3.12 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.

Suggs joins recent Gatorade Minnesota Football Players of the Year Jason Williamson (2018-19 and 2017-18, Owatonna Senior High School), Wade Sullivan (2016-17, Lakeville North High School), J.D. Spielman (2015-16, Eden Prairie High School) and Ryan Schlichte (2014-15, Mankato West High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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