

**JOPLIN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MISSOURI 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 **Isaiah Davis of Joplin High School** as its **2019-20 Gatorade Missouri Football Player of the Year**. Davis is the first Gatorade Missouri Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Joplin 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 Davis as Missouri'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, Joplin 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-1, 230-pound senior running back and linebacker rushed for 2,283 yards and 45 touchdowns on 252 carries this past season, leading the Eagles (13-1) to the Class 6 state championship game. Davis also caught 19 passes for 220 yards and two touchdowns, while recording 50 tackles on defense. An All-Central Ozarks Conference selection, he was a Second Team All-State honoree as a junior.

Davis has served as a mentor for students with special needs and has volunteered locally on behalf of the Miracle League baseball program. "Isaiah Davis is a big, physical running back with good speed," said Doug Buckmaster, head coach at Carl Junction High. "He's a great leader and the glue that keeps the Joplin team together. In crunch time, he's the one who drives the bus."

Davis has maintained a 3.33 GPA in the classroom. He has verbally committed to play football on scholarship at South Dakota 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.

Davis joins recent Gatorade Missouri Football Players of the Year Isaiah Williams (2018-19 & 2017-18, Trinity Catholic High School), Alex Huston (2016-17, Glendale High School), Skylar Thompson (2015-16, Fort Osage High School) and T.J. Green (2014-15, Rockhurst High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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