

**RIO RANCHO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NEW MEXICO 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 Chavez of Rio Rancho High School** as its **2019-20 Gatorade New Mexico Football Player of the Year**. Chavez is the third Gatorade New Mexico Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Rio Rancho 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 Chavez as New Mexico'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, Chavez 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, 172-pound senior quarterback passed for 2,006 yards and 22 touchdowns this past season, leading the Rams (8-5) to the Class 6A state championship game. Chavez also rushed for 1,407 yards and 21 scores, including 198 yards and four TDs in a 48-40 loss to Cleveland High in the state title game. The 1-6A District Player of the Year, he concluded his prep career with 4,243 passing yards, 2,268 rushing yards and 77 total touchdowns.

A member of the Rio Rancho High Leadership Council, Chavez has volunteered locally on behalf of the Special Olympics and as a youth football coach. "Isaiah has been the glue that has restructured this program," said David Howes, head coach of Rio Rancho High. "People wrote us off after an 0-2 start yet he managed to pick us up and help us win some terrific football games."

Chavez has maintained a weighted 3.35 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.

Chavez joins recent Gatorade New Mexico Football Players of the Year Dorian Lewis (2018-19, Sue Cleveland High School), Brandon Baeza (2017-18, Las Cruces High School), Josh Foley (2016-17, Rio Rancho High School), Gabe Ortega (2015-16, Sue Cleveland High School) and Zach Gentry (2014-15, Eldorado High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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

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