

**CABELL MIDLAND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE WEST VIRGINIA 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 **JJ Roberts of Cabell Midland High School** as its **2019-20 Gatorade West Virginia Football Player of the Year**. Roberts is the first Gatorade West Virginia Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Cabell Midland 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 Roberts as West Virginia'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, Roberts 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, 185-pound senior defensive back and quarterback had led the Knights (13-0) to a berth in the Class AAA state championship game at the time of his selection. Roberts rushed for 1,426 yards and 23 touchdowns while passing for 360 yards and four scores through 13 games. A First Team All-State selection as a junior, Roberts recorded 48 tackles and three interceptions entering the state title game, returning one for a TD, on defense.

Roberts has volunteered locally on an elementary school literacy program, and has donated his time on behalf of multiple community service initiatives through his church youth group. "JJ is a very unselfish player who impacts the game in every way," said Luke Salmons, head coach of Cabell Midland High School. "All the players look up to JJ and he leads them on and off the field."

Roberts has maintained a 3.67 GPA in the classroom. He has verbally committed to play football on scholarship at Wake Forest 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.

Roberts joins recent Gatorade West Virginia Football Players of the Year Graeson Malashevich (2018-19, Spring Valley High School), Tyson Bagent (2017-18, Martinsburg High School), Isaac Brown (2016-17, Martinsburg High School), Cody Mitchell (2015-16, Point Pleasant High School) and Kentre Grier (2014-15, South Charleston High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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