

**THOMPSON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE ALABAMA FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 13, 2021) — In its 36<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Conner Harrell of Thompson High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Alabama Football Player of the Year. Harrell is the first Gatorade Alabama Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Thompson 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 Harrell as Alabama's best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award to be announced in May, Harrell 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, 190-pound junior quarterback led the Warriors to a 14-0 record and a second straight Class 7A state championship this past season. Harrell passed for 3,570 yards and 42 touchdowns, also rushing for 319 yards and five scores. He threw for 10 TDs in four postseason games, including two in the state final before breaking his collarbone early in the second quarter. A First Team All-State selection, he was the Alabama Sports Writers Association's Class 7A Back of the Year.

Harrell has volunteered locally as part of multiple community service initiatives through his church. "Conner has all of 'it' as a quarterback," said Josh Niblett, head coach of Hoover High School. "His legs are just as good as his arm. His dual-threat ability is something you have to contend with. He's special."

Harrell has maintained a weighted 4.56 GPA in the classroom. He will begin his senior year of high school 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 & field, and awards one National Player of the Year in each sport. The selection process is administered by the Gatorade Player of the Year Selection Committee, which works with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

Harrell joins recent Gatorade Alabama Football Players of the Year Kristian Story (2019-20, Lanett High School), Bo Nix (2018-19, Pinson Valley High School), Asa Martin (2017-18, Austin High School), and Jaylond Adams (2016-17, Minor High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Through Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Harrell has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of their choosing. Harrell is also eligible to submit a 30-second video explaining why the organization they chose is deserving of one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants, which will be announced throughout the year. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners' grants have totaled more than \$2.7 million across 1,117 organizations.

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 [playeroftheyear.gatorade.com](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com), on Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://facebook.com/GatoradePOY) or follow us on Twitter at [twitter.com/Gatorade](https://twitter.com/Gatorade).

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