

**VALOR CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE COLORADO 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 Gavin Sawchuk of Valor Christian High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Colorado Football Player of the Year. Sawchuk is the third Gatorade Colorado Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Valor Christian 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 Sawchuk as Colorado'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, Sawchuk 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 5-foot-11, 180-pound junior running back rushed for 1,239 yards and 17 touchdowns this past season, leading the Eagles (7-1) to the Class 5A state championship game. Sawchuk averaged 9.5 yards per carry and also returned a kickoff for a score. A two-time First Team All-State selection, Sawchuk is ranked as the nation's No. 65 recruit in the Class of 2022 by ESPN.com. He concluded his junior year with 3,720 yards and 49 touchdowns on the ground.

A member of the Valor Christian Cum Laude Society, Sawchuk helped build an early childhood education program to maintain the physical and mental well-being of area children. He has also volunteered locally with Rocky Mountain Service Employment Redevelopment and as a youth football coach. "I have coached and played against some amazing football players—Gavin is the best high school player I have ever seen," said Brian Tinker, head coach of Rock Canyon High School. "His ability to accelerate through the line of scrimmage and to make a move in the backfield to change direction is almost impossible to defend."

Sawchuk has maintained a weighted 3.67 GPA in the classroom. He will begin his senior year of high school this 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.

Sawchuk joins recent Gatorade Colorado Football Players of the Year Tanner Hollens (2019-20, Columbine High School), Aidan Atkinson (2018-19, Fairview High School), Ty Evans (2017-18, Palmer Ridge High School), and Dylan McCaffrey (2016-17, Valor Christian High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Through Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Sawchuk has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of their choosing. Sawchuk 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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