

**EAGLE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE IDAHO FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 13, 2021) — In its 36th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Ben Ford of Eagle High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Idaho Football Player of the Year. Ford is the fourth Gatorade Idaho Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Eagle 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 Ford as Idaho'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, Ford 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, 185-pound senior quarterback and safety rushed for 1,056 yards and 12 touchdowns on 92 carries this past season, averaging 11.5 yards per attempt and leading the Mustangs (6-2) to the Class 5A quarterfinals. Ford also passed for 977 yards and 14 touchdowns, completing 68 of 128 passes while throwing only three interceptions. The All-Idaho Player of the Year, he was also named the Southern Idaho Conference Player of the Year.

Ford has volunteered locally on behalf of youth baseball and football programs. "Ben Ford is the most dynamic athlete I've seen in a long time," said Armando Gonzalez, head coach at Rigby High. "Not only is he lightning fast, but he's tough and plays fearless. The kid can take over a game in the blink of an eye."

Ford has maintained a 3.68 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play football on scholarship at Boise State University 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.

Ford joins recent Gatorade Idaho Football Players of the Year Austin Bolt (2019-20, Borah High School), Keegan Duncan (2018-19, Declo High School), Tommy Togiati (2017-18, Highland High School), and Colson Yankoff (2016-17, Coeur d'Alene High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Through Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Ford has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of their choosing. Ford 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, on Facebook at facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/Gatorade.

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