

**ANTIOCH COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE ILLINOIS 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 Athan Kaliakmanis of Antioch Community High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Illinois Football Player of the Year. Kaliakmanis is the first Gatorade Illinois Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Antioch Community 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 Kaliakmanis as Illinois'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, Kaliakmanis 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-4, 205-pound senior quarterback passed for 1,158 yards and 15 touchdowns this past season, leading the Sequoits (6-0) to an unbeaten season. Kaliakmanis completed 77 of 132 passes with just one interception, while also rushing for 245 yards and four TDs on 40 carries. The Northern Lake County Conference Player of the Year and captain of the Daily Herald Lake County All-Area team, he is ranked as the nation's No. 11 dual-threat quarterback in the Class of 2021 by 247Sports.

Also a track standout, Kaliakmanis has participated in a school diversity initiative and has donated his time to raising funds for children with Central Auditory Processing Disorder (CAPD). "Athan is, by far, one of the most talented players I've ever coached against," said Jordan Eder, head coach at Lakes Community High. "He's a tremendous athlete and competitor who can make every throw on the field, whether he's set, on the run, throwing across his body—it never seems to matter, he always gets the ball where it needs to go. If he has any weaknesses, we haven't been able to find them."

Kaliakmanis has maintained a B average in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play football on scholarship at the University of Minnesota 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.

Kaliakmanis joins recent Gatorade Illinois Football Players of the Year A.J. Henning (2019-20, Lincoln-Way East High School), Jirehl Brock (2018-19, Quincy Senior High School), Samson Evans (2017-18, Prairie Ridge High School), and Jake Marwede (2016-17, Loyola Academy), among the state's list of former award winners.

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