

**CENTER GROVE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE INDIANA 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 Carson Steele of Center Grove High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Indiana Football Player of the Year. Steele is the third Gatorade Indiana Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Center Grove 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 Steele as Indiana'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, Steele 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-2, 220-pound senior running back led the Trojans to a 14-0 record and the Class 6A state championship this past season. Steele rushed for 1,659 yards and 31 touchdowns, including 110 yards and two scores in a 38-14 win over Westfield High in the state final. The Indiana Football Coaches Association's 2020 Mr. Football winner, Steele is a two-time First Team All-State selection. He concluded his prep football career with 5,907 rushing yards and 82 touchdowns.

Steele has volunteered locally with the Johnson County Special Olympics and as a youth mentor in addition to donating his time as a youth football coach. "Carson was the focal point of every team they faced and produced week in and week out," said Jason Simmons, head coach of Ben Davis High. "He set the table for everyone else on their team to have success."

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

Steele joins recent Gatorade Indiana Football Players of the Year Charlie Spegal (2019-20, New Palestine High School), David Bell (2018-19, Warren Central High School), Tyrone Tracy (2017-18, Decatur Central High School), and Russ Yeast (2016-17, Center Grove High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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