

**OABCIG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE IOWA 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 Cooper DeJean of OABCIG High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Iowa Football Player of the Year. DeJean is the first Gatorade Iowa Football Player of the Year to be chosen from OABCIG 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 DeJean as Iowa'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, DeJean 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, 205-pound senior quarterback and safety passed for 3,447 yards and 35 touchdowns this past season, leading the Falcons to a 12-0 record and the Class 1A state championship. DeJean completed 199 of 331 passes, while rushing for 1,235 yards and 24 touchdowns on 131 carries. The All-American Bowl adidas Player of the Year, he was also named Sioux City Journal Player of the Year and was selected as captain of the Class 1A All-State team.

DeJean has served as a mentor for elementary school students and has volunteered locally on behalf of youth football programs. "Cooper DeJean is the biggest difference-maker I have ever seen on a football team," said Dale Tokheim, head coach at Ridge View High. "He's big, strong, fast, quick, intelligent and he's an accurate thrower. He's a great safety and he makes big plays on special teams too."

DeJean 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 Iowa 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.

DeJean joins recent Gatorade Iowa Football Players of the Year Hunter Dekkers (2019-20, West Sioux High School), Max Duggan (2018-19, Lewis Central High School), Evan Flitz (2017-18, Iowa City West High School), and Oliver Martin (2016-17, Iowa City West High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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