

**WEST BLOOMFIELD HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MICHIGAN 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 Donovan Edwards of West Bloomfield High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Michigan Football Player of the Year. Edwards is the first Gatorade Michigan Football Player of the Year to be chosen from West Bloomfield 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 Edwards as Michigan'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, Edwards 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, 195-pound senior running back rushed for 1,502 yards and 30 touchdowns on 134 carries this past season, leading the Lakers (11-1) to the Division 1 state championship. Edwards also caught 15 passes for 149 yards and three touchdowns. Captain of the Detroit Free Press Dream Team, he was an All-State honoree, a MaxPreps First Team All-American and was named to the 2021 Under Armour All-America Game roster.

Edwards has served as a mentor for at-risk students and has volunteered locally on behalf of youth football programs. "Donovan Edwards is the most dominant skill player I've seen in 23 years of coaching," said John Blackstock, head coach at Lake Orion High. "He has a unique combination of speed and strength, but what I feel sets him apart is an innate ability to take over a game."

Edwards has maintained a 3.05 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play football on scholarship at the University of Michigan 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.

Edwards joins recent Gatorade Michigan Football Players of the Year Cameron Martinez (2019-20, Muskegon High School), Dequan Finn (2018-19, Martin Luther King High School), La'Darius Jefferson (2017-18, Muskegon High School), and Donovan Peoples-Jones (2016-17, Cass Technical High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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