

**CLEVELAND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NEW MEXICO 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 Luke Wysong of Cleveland High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade New Mexico Football Player of the Year. Wysong is the fourth Gatorade New Mexico Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Cleveland 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 Wysong as New Mexico'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, Wysong 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-10, 185-pound senior wide receiver and defensive back led the Storm to a 4-0 record and a victory over Las Cruces High in a Class 6A bowl game this past season. Wysong caught 15 passes for 429 yards and six touchdowns, averaging 28.6 yards per reception. He also rushed for two scores and averaged 23 yards per return on 12 punt returns. Defensively, Wysong recorded eight tackles. A 2019 Class 6A First Team All-State selection, he concluded his prep football career with 1,173 receiving yards and 14 total touchdowns.

A Rio Rancho Fire Department and Police Department Youth Volunteer, Wysong has donated his time locally as part of food-donation drives and he has volunteered on behalf of multiple community service initiatives through his church youth group. "Luke is undoubtedly a stud," said Mark Lopez, head coach of Las Cruces High. "He is likely the fastest kid in the state and is extremely explosive with the ball in his hands."

Wysong has maintained a weighted 3.24 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play football on scholarship at the University of New Mexico 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.

Wysong joins recent Gatorade New Mexico Football Players of the Year Isaiah Chavez (2019-20, Rio Rancho High School), Dorian Lewis (2018-19, Sue Cleveland High School), Brandon Baeza (2017-18, Las Cruces High School), and Josh Foley (2016-17, Rio Rancho High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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

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