

**TUALATIN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE OREGON 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 Cole Prusia of Tualatin High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Oregon Football Player of the Year. Prusia is the second Gatorade Oregon Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Tualatin 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 Prusia as Oregon'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, Prusia 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-3, 200-pound junior wide receiver and defensive back led the Timberwolves to a 4-2 record during an abbreviated spring season. Prusia caught 31 passes for 554 yards and nine touchdowns, averaging 17.9 yards per reception. The Class 5A/6A OregonPrepHub Co-Offensive Player of the Year, Prusia was also a First Team All-State selection on defense after recording three interceptions and nine pass break-ups.

Tualatin High's 2020 Chemistry Student of the Year, Prusia has volunteered during the pandemic delivering food to those in need. He has also donated his time as a youth football coach and referee. "Cole completely changes the game when he is in," said Spencer Phillips, head coach of Lakeridge High. "He has the chance to change the game every time he touches the ball. And when he is on defense, he plays the entire field."

Prusia has maintained a weighted 4.03 GPA in the classroom. He has verbally committed to play football on scholarship at Oregon State University beginning in the fall of 2022.

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.

Prusia joins recent Gatorade Oregon Football Players of the Year Casey Filkins (2019-20, Lake Oswego High School), Nathan Overholt (2018-19, Wilsonville High School), Trey Lowe (2017-18, Jesuit High School), and Tim Tawa (2016-17, West Linn High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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