

**MOUNT ANTHONY UNION HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE VERMONT 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 Gavin Johnson of Mount Anthony Union High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Vermont Football Player of the Year. Johnson is the second Gatorade Vermont Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Mount Anthony Union 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 Johnson as Vermont'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, Johnson 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, 205-pound senior wide receiver, tight end, safety and punter was a 2019 Division II First Team All-State honoree. As a junior, Johnson caught 39 passes for 896 yards and 12 touchdowns, leading the Patriots to the Division II state quarterfinals. During the unofficial 7-on-7 season this past fall, Johnson hauled in five touchdown passes and returned three interceptions for scores. He was selected to participate in the 2020 Senior Hawaii Tiki Bowl.

Johnson has volunteered locally with the SVSU Education Equity Board, which helped distribute grant money to aid student and teacher training to close racial gaps in education services. He has also donated his time as a youth football and basketball official. "Gavin Johnson is by head and shoulders the best player in the state," said Chad Pacheco, head coach of Brattleboro High School. "He's an explosive athlete. There has not been a player with his size and speed in Vermont for a long time."

Johnson has maintained a weighted 3.05 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play football on scholarship at Assumption College in Massachusetts 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.

Johnson joins recent Gatorade Vermont Football Players of the Year Joey McCoy (2019-20, Burr & Burton Academy), Jake Cady (2018-19, St. Johnsbury Academy), Tyler Hamilton (2017-18, Hartford High School), and Griff Stalcup (2016-17, Burr & Burton Academy), among the state's list of former award winners.

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