

**KENNEDY CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE WASHINGTON 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 Sam Huard of Kennedy Catholic High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Washington Football Player of the Year. Huard is the first Gatorade Washington Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Kennedy Catholic 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 Huard as Washington'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, Huard 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, 185-pound senior quarterback led the Lancers to a 6-0 record during an abbreviated spring season. Huard passed for 1,481 yards and 21 touchdowns with zero interceptions, completing 73.2 percent of his passes. He played in only three games in 2021 before graduating high school early to attend spring practices at the University of Washington. Ranked as the nation's No. 15 recruit in the Class of 2021 by ESPN.com, Huard concluded his prep football career with a state-record 13,226 passing yards to go along with 153 TD passes.

A founder of Student-Athletes of Washington (SAM), Huard respectfully advocated for fall sports to be reinstated during the pandemic. He has volunteered locally at a food bank and homeless shelter, and he has also donated his time as a youth football coach and youth basketball referee. "Sam was special from Day One when we played them his freshman year," said Tony Davis, head coach of Tahoma High School. "The first thing that stood out to me was his accuracy. He has had a talented group of receivers, but he puts the ball in places that allow them to make big catches and to make big runs after their catches. The sky's the limit for Sam."

Huard has maintained a 3.25 GPA in the classroom. Taking advantage of NCAA early signing rules, Huard inked a financial-aid agreement that paved the way for him to enroll at the University of Washington. He graduated from high school in April and started attending classes in Seattle in the spring semester.

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.

Huard joins recent Gatorade Washington Football Players of the Year Emeka Egbuka (2019-20, Steilacoom High School), Jacob Holcomb (2018-19, Puyallup High School), Isaiah Ifanse (2017-18, Bellevue High School), and Jack Colletto (2016-17, Camas High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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