

**PULASKI ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE ARKANSAS FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (December 7, 2021) — In its 37th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Joe Himon of Pulaski Academy** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Arkansas Football Player of the Year**. Himon is the fourth Gatorade Arkansas Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Pulaski Academy.

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 Himon as Arkansas's best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award to be announced in December, Himon joins an elite alumni association of state 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-9, 180-pound senior running back had led the Bruins to a 12-1 record and a berth in the Class 5A state championship game at the time of his selection. Himon rushed for 1,511 yards and 27 touchdowns on 134 carries through 13 games. He also caught 76 passes for 844 yards and 11 touchdowns. A three-time All-State selection, Himon is also a two-time finalist for the Landers Award, given to the state's top player.

A devoted member of his church's youth ministry, Himon has volunteered locally on behalf of the Watershed Human and Community Development Agency and youth sports camps. "Joe Himon is an excellent running back with outstanding ball skills, which makes him a dual threat, both running and receiving," said Eric Cohu, head coach at Little Rock Christian High School. "He's an exceptional athlete and competitor."

Himon has maintained a 3.50 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play football on scholarship at Northwestern University next 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 leverages experts including coaches, scouts, media and others as sources to help evaluate and determine the state winners in each sport.

Himon joins recent Gatorade Arkansas Football Players of the Year Austin Ledbetter (2020-21, Bryant High School), Jacolby Criswell (2019-20, Morrilton High School), Justice Hill (2018-19, Little Rock Christian Academy), and Layne Hatcher (2017-18, Pulaski Academy), among the state's list of former award winners.

Gatorade has a long-standing history of serving athlete communities and understands how sports instill valuable lifelong skills on and off the field. Through Gatorade's "Play it Forward" platform, Himon has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national organization of their choosing that helps young athletes realize the benefits of playing sports. Himon is also eligible to submit a short 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 \$3.5 million across more than 1,300 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 or follow us on social media on Facebook at facebook.com/GatoradePOY, Instagram at instagram.com/Gatorade and Twitter at twitter.com/Gatorade.

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