

**VALOR CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE COLORADO 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 **Gavin Sawchuk of Valor Christian High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Colorado Football Player of the Year**. Sawchuk is the third Gatorade Colorado Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Valor Christian 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 Sawchuk as Colorado'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, Sawchuk 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.).

At the time of his selection, the 5-foot-11, 190-pound senior running back had led the Eagles to a 13-0 record and a berth in the Class 5A state championship game against Cherry Creek High. The state's returning Gatorade Player of the Year, Sawchuk rushed for 1,932 yards and 28 touchdowns, averaging 7.4 yards per carry, while also catching two TD passes through 13 games. A 2020 First Team Class 5A All-State selection, he entered the state title game with 5,652 rushing yards and 77 touchdowns in his prep football career.

A member of the Valor Christian Cum Laude Society, Sawchuk helped build an early childhood education program to maintain the physical and mental wellbeing of children. He has also volunteered locally with Rocky Mountain Service Employment Redevelopment and as a youth football coach. "Gavin is an exceptional talent," said Donnie Yantis, head coach of Valor Christian High School. "He is, without question, the best running back I have ever coached."

Sawchuk has maintained a weighted 3.64 GPA in the classroom. He has verbally committed to play football on scholarship at the University of Oklahoma 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.

Two-time winner Sawchuk joins recent Gatorade Colorado Football Players of the Year Tanner Hollens (2019-20, Columbine High School), Aidan Atkinson (2018-19, Fairview High School), and Ty Evans (2017-18, Palmer Ridge High School), 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, Sawchuk 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. Sawchuk 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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