

**ROCHESTER HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE ILLINOIS 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 **Hank Beatty of Rochester High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Illinois Football Player of the Year**. Beatty is the first Gatorade Illinois Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Rochester 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 Beatty as Illinois'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, Beatty 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 6-foot, 185-pound senior quarterback and wide receiver passed for 1,899 yards and 23 touchdowns this past season, leading the Rockets (11-2) to the Class 4A semifinals. Beatty completed 152 of 236 passes while also rushing for 1,371 yards and 24 touchdowns on 146 carries. He added 22 receptions for 341 yards and another two scores. A two-time First Team All-State selection, Beatty topped the career 2,000-yard plateau in three offensive categories: rushing, receiving and passing.

Beatty has volunteered locally on behalf of youth sports camps. "Hank Beatty is the most versatile athlete I've ever coached against," said Mark Grounds, head coach at Jacksonville High School. "He could be the best wide receiver in the state and he's currently one of the best quarterbacks. He's a complete game-changer, no matter where he is."

Beatty has maintained a weighted 4.52 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play football on scholarship at the University of Illinois 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.

Beatty joins recent Gatorade Illinois Football Players of the Year Athan Kaliakmanis (2020-21, Antioch Community High School), A.J. Henning (2019-20, Lincoln-Way East High School), Jirehl Brock (2018-19, Quincy Senior High School), and Samson Evans (2017-18, Prairie 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, Beatty 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. Beatty 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.