

**OXFORD HILLS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MAINE 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 **Eli Soehren of Oxford Hills High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Maine Football Player of the Year**. Soehren is the second Gatorade Maine Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Oxford Hills 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 Soehren as Maine'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, Soehren 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-2, 201-pound junior quarterback and free safety passed for 1,904 yards and 25 touchdowns this past season, leading the Vikings (8-2) to the Class A state championship game. Soehren also rushed for 903 yards and eight scores. Defensively, the Class A Player of the Year totaled 20 tackles and four interceptions.

Soehren has volunteered locally as a freshman mentor and as a youth basketball coach. "Eli Soehren really hurt our team the most both running and throwing," said David Morris, head coach of Bangor High School. "Eli was a leader as well. His team looked to him and he responded well in adverse situations."

Soehren has maintained a weighted 4.0 GPA in the classroom. He will begin his senior year of high school 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.

Soehren joins recent Gatorade Maine Football Players of the Year Wyatt Hathaway (2020-21, Leavitt Area High School), Zach Maturo (2019-20, Bonny Eagle High School), Anthony Bracamonte (2018-19, Thornton Academy), and Owen Garrard (2017-18, Scarborough 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, Soehren 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. Soehren 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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