

**LAKEVILLE SOUTH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MINNESOTA 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 **Carson Hansen of Lakeville South High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Minnesota Football Player of the Year**. Hansen is the first Gatorade Minnesota Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Lakeville South 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 Hansen as Minnesota'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, Hansen 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-1, 190-pound junior running back led the Cougars to a 13-0 record and the Class 6A state championship this past season. Hansen rushed for 2,012 yards and 23 touchdowns, averaging 12.0 yards per carry. A Minneapolis Star Tribune First Team All-Metro selection, he also caught four TD passes and scored 10 touchdowns in five postseason games.

A member of Young Life, Hansen has volunteered locally with Feed My Starving Children. He has also donated his time organizing and running a youth football camp. "Carson is the ultimate back that can run, block and catch," said Ray Betton, head coach of Shakopee High School. "He runs extremely hard and has long (home run) speed as well. He gets the really tough yards."

Hansen has maintained a 3.73 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.

Hansen joins recent Gatorade Minnesota Football Players of the Year Trey Feeney (2020-21, Moorhead High School), Jalen Suggs (2019-20, Minnehaha Academy), and Jason Williamson (2018-19 & 2017-18, Owatonna Senior 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, Hansen 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. Hansen 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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